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ON  
SPERMATORRHŒA;

ITS  
***PATHOLOGY, RESULTS, AND COMPLICATIONS.***

LANE LIBRARY  
BY

J. L. MILTON,

SENIOR SURGEON TO ST. JOHN'S HOSPITAL FOR DISEASES OF THE SKIN.

*Enlarged and Reprinted from the original Papers published in the LANCET  
for 1854, and the MEDICAL CIRCULAR for 1858.*

ELEVENTH EDITION.



LONDON:

HENRY RENSHAW, 356, STRAND, W.C.

1881.

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YBA9811 3MA1

LONDON :  
HARRISON AND SONS, PRINTERS, ST. MARTIN'S LANE.

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## PREFACE.

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EVERY effort has been made to render this edition as complete as the nature of the subject admitted. I am not aware that any attainable sources of information have been neglected. It is, however, only right to say that, although numerous references have been made to the writings of others, the bulk of the work is, after all, essentially clinical, the fruit of observation rather than of reading.

I have been told that the description I had given of the effects produced by the disease was overdrawn. My answer is very simple. I have taken my accounts from the statements made by patients, not from the opinions of compilers. I have spoken of symptoms and results as I found them, and as any one may find them who chooses to seek for them. Whether a description from Nature agrees or not with the doctrines taught in schools, and laid down in text-books, is a matter which does not concern me, and upon which I accordingly forbear to enter.

It has been said that Spermatorrhœa is a mere symptom, a result of morbid imagination which ought not to be ranked as a disease. With all deference I submit that the arguments in favour of spermatorrhœa being a disease are unanswerable. Even were it merely a symptom I should consider that it merits all the attention my readers can give it. One of the best practitioners of modern days, Sir Benjamin Brodie, tells us that the discrepancies between the systems of pathologists and the experience of surgeons would be avoided, "if writers would sometimes con-

descend to treat of symptoms rather than diseases," and he is only one of many who, in the evening of life, warned by the errors and misery they have seen result from a blind adherence to systems and fashions, have arrived at the conviction that symptoms, which are eternal in their nature and as indestructible as the qualities of matter, belong to those little things which, after all, chiefly make up the great business of life, and which are of far more moment than any theory or system—things of sand, heaped up by one flood only to be scattered by another.

When I began these investigations little had been done towards settling and completing the treatment of this affection. Hunter's limited experience was rather entertaining as a narrative than useful as a guide, and the subject had been little more than opened up in Mr. Curling's excellent work. Indeed, practically speaking, the only rule of treatment was the unsparing use of the nitrate, as supposed to be taught by Lallemand, though he really used it in moderation and had much less faith in it than his imitators. Now a code of rules has been drawn up, intended at any rate to meet, not only the usual run of cases, but those relapses and complications which, whatever may be said to the contrary, often prove very embarrassing in practice.

18, SUFFOLK STREET,  
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# SPERMATORRHŒA :

ITS

## *PATHOLOGY, RESULTS, AND COMPLICATIONS.*

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"Spermatorrhœa is a disease, and ought to be studied, understood, and treated as such."—Clinical Lecture by John Adams, Esq. *Medical Times*, 1857, vol. i, p. 453.

"Die Pathologie der Functionen der Genital-Organen ist, gegenüber den Störungen anderer Functionengebiete, immer noch ein steriles Feld."—"Studien und Erfahrungen über Samenverluste, von Dr. Dicenta."—*Deutsche Klinik*, 1857, S. 13.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DISEASE.

By this I mean the collecting and gathering together into one focus a few fragmentary and scattered observations relating to the subject; for history it has none. That of gonorrhœa and syphilis is obscure enough; but compared with the darkness which rests on spermatorrhœa it is light itself. Most likely the complaint began to affect men as soon as they first commenced abandoning the life of the hunter and rude shepherd for that of citizens,—when they began, for the sake of safety and greater ease of living, to sleep in the low-browed, pent-up rooms of the close-built, little fortified cities and towns of the olden times; for such is its nature. It seems beyond all doubt that Moses legislated for those affected with it, and that it was described and treated, either by Hippocrates himself, or by some one who lived near his day; for be the work "about diseases" (*περι νοσων*) genuine or spurious as regards its authorship by the father of medicine, it was clearly written by an experienced physician, and not long after the time

of Hippocrates. The author not only describes<sup>1</sup> spermatorrhœa, but discharges from the seminal vesicles; and advises for the treatment of the former, abstinence from immoderate drinking, venery, and excessive exercise, except walking, for a year. The patient was also to avoid exposure to cold and the sun, and to take the tepid bath,—advice which I am afraid was, except in respect to the abstinence, hardly likely to be very beneficial.

Celsus again treats of spermatorrhœa,<sup>2</sup> but only in a very advanced and pretty well hopeless state; if, indeed, in what he says, he described a discharge of semen, and not, as was more probably the case, in some cases at any rate, either cystorrhœa or gleet of the seminal vesicles. He recommends for it very strong frictions and affusions: cold swimming-baths, he also says, are useful, and both food and drink are to be taken cold. Moreover, the patient is to avoid all crudities, all flatulent food, and everything that promotes the secretion of semen. As some of my readers may wish to know what the grand old writer included under this last head, I give the list. It comprises winter wheat, simila, most probably corresponding to the flour used by our bakers for making white bread, eggs, alica, supposed to have been the kind of coarse wheat called spelt in some places,—now, I believe, disused in England, but still grown in France,—starch, all kinds of glutinous flesh, pepper, rocket, bulbs, and pine-nuts. He also suggests fomenting the lower parts with a decoction of astringent vervains, and covering the lower portion of the abdomen with cataplasms of the same herbs, and particularly of rue, steeped in vinegar, and cautions the patient to avoid sleeping in a supine position.

It would scarcely be just to reproach Celsus, as we might very justly reproach a physician of the present day, for basing treatment on principles which he never had, and never could have, proved practically; for he only did what others have been doing ever since. Contrary to what happens in all other arts, men seem to have only too often begun in medicine by taking measures rather from a conviction or fancy as to what would result from doing so, than from observation of what had been seen to follow this,—a

<sup>1</sup> *Magn. Hipp., Op. omnia.* Edit. Car. C. G. Kühn. Tom. ii, p. 265.

<sup>2</sup> *De Medicinâ,* lib. iv, c. 21.



practice by no means discontinued at the present day. It will, however, be pretty obvious to those acquainted with the therapeutics of spermatorrhœa, that with the exception of the cold affusion, the application of vinegar and rue to the genital organs, and the avoidance of a supine position, there is little in the prescriptions of Celsus that was likely to have been of service to his patients. Cold food, so far from being beneficial, would, if it exerted any influence at all, act injuriously; as a patient in a state of tabes—for it is this state which he is professing to treat—would require all the support he could get; and one very certain means of nullifying this object would be to make his food unpalatable. As to the properties attributed by Celsus to the proscribed articles of diet, we may dismiss the whole subject at once, by observing that up to the present time nothing has been made out on this head.

At one time, judging from a passage in the translation of Plutarch by the Langhorns, I felt inclined to adopt their reading, and to believe that the great Alcides himself was reputed to have undergone purification on account of having suffered from this disorder. Considering the freedom with which Horace, to whom the doors of the best society in Rome stood open, handles<sup>1</sup> the subject, there would be nothing unusual in an allusion to it by a greek author of later date, pretty extensively if not accurately acquainted with roman literature; and certainly the words used by the translators are scarcely applicable to anything else. "Hercules," they say,<sup>2</sup> "was initiated into the mysteries of Ceres, having first obtained lustration, as he desired, on account of several involuntary pollutions." But on going through the original, I am disposed to conclude that the translation is misleading, that the rendering should be "senseless acts," and that perhaps Plutarch had in view the deeds of violence attributed to Hercules. I need scarcely point out that it matters little here whether Hercules ever existed or not, the question being really whether the affection was known and spoken of in Plutarch's time, which, even after rejection of the foregoing passage as evidence, was, I should think, reasoning from collateral testimony, certainly the case.

<sup>1</sup> *Satirarum*, lib. 1, § l. 84.

<sup>2</sup> *Plutarch's Lives*, 1821, vol. i, Theseus, p. 90.

We may now pass over centuries, during which, so far as my reading has enabled me to ascertain, the subject was rarely touched upon, except in a very brief and fragmentary manner. Even those medical writers who flourished towards the close of the fifteenth and early part of the sixteenth century, who studied syphilis with such care and diligence as to have bequeathed to their successors a large amount of valuable information, and understood it better in some respects than such men as Sydenham and Hunter, never seemed to have grasped the nature of this complaint, which had become inextricably mixed up with gonorrhœa, the pathology of the latter being in a state of confusion which no words can paint. Certainly I have not found among them a single satisfactory account of the affection. There is just evidence enough to warrant the assumption that it continued to exist, sometimes even in a very severe form, and no more. During the interval which elapsed between this epoch and that of Hunter, a solitary instance or two excepted, almost unbroken silence prevails about it. Those who wish to go farther into this part of the matter, to link together the scattered scraps and patches of medical lore on this point, will find in earlier editions of this work a list of all the references I have been able to meet with; though I can scarcely imagine a more unprofitable task than pursuing such researches. In this long period of time much had been done towards improving the knowledge of syphilis; and the treatment of gonorrhœa, though still rude and incomplete enough in some respects, had, in point of efficacy, advanced nearer to the standard of the present day than might be thought; but the cloud still hung over spermatorrhœa, its unfavourable fortune continued to pursue it, and the pathology and treatment of it remained in much the same position as ever.

It is to the illustrious John Hunter that we are indebted for the first suggestions of a rational mode of treating this disorder. His method, it is true, was based on very simple means, being principally limited to the use of laudanum and cold bathing.<sup>1</sup> But the free use of sedatives in spermatorrhœa is a valuable improvement in the treatment of it. Moreover, though Sir Everard

<sup>1</sup> *A Treatise on the Venereal Disease*; 1810, pp. 220-222.



Home was, perhaps, the first<sup>1</sup> to bring forward another great improvement, that of using nitrate of silver in those cases, yet I am very strongly disposed to believe he stole the idea from Hunter, and that but for the inspiration of his renowned master he could never have thought of caustic in this disorder or stricture. This may seem a harsh charge against the memory of one who long stood so prominently forward almost as the representative of Hunter, and the continuator of his labours; but there is so little in the way of discovery in his writings that it is difficult to divest one's mind of such impressions; and if his fame suffer now<sup>\*</sup> unjustly for what he might never have done, the reader must bear in mind that his piracy of Hunter's discoveries, and the destruction of his manuscripts, were acts calculated to expose him to suspicions of the worst nature.

But it is not until we come to the time of Lallemand, Curling, and Phillips that we find spermatorrhœa elevated to its true position of a special, independent disorder; and it is perhaps to the first of these, more than to any writer of the present day, that surgery is indebted for such impetus as has been given of late years to the study of this disease. Enjoying, as he did, excellent opportunities for studying the complaint, he made such good use of them that his work will remain a lasting memorial of his genius and industry. I am well aware that it is open to severe censure, that in many parts it is only too redolent of exaggeration and bad taste, and that his treatment requires great modification. But for all this, it is quite certain that to M. Lallemand belongs the merit of having done his best to force upon the profession a recognition of the importance of the disorder, and of having pointed out the necessity for pursuing the only method by which the obscurities surrounding its pathology and treatment can be cleared up—extended clinical and *post-mortem* observations.

M. Lallemand found in Mr. Phillips, of Westminster Hospital, an earnest propagator of his views as to treatment, the value of which he carefully endeavoured to expound, while he warned men at the same time against M. Lallemand's high colouring. It was reserved, however, for Mr. Curling to produce a view<sup>2</sup> of the

<sup>1</sup> *On the Treatment of Strictures in the Urethra*; 1803, vol. ii, p. 249.

<sup>2</sup> In his *Practical Treatise on Diseases of the Testis*, 1856, chap. xvii.

pathology and treatment of this disorder, which, while free from the errors and over-strained views of M. Lallemand, was yet well calculated to lend the subject its due importance. Every person desirous of mastering this subject should make himself familiar with Mr. Curling's work. I cannot say that I think he has given as much attention to the therapeutical part as one could have wished ; still his remarks are so evidently the result of careful and extensive observation, that few can read them even cursorily without learning something.

*Present State of Professional Opinion on the Subject.*—The present state of opinion about spermatorrhœa, both in the profession and among the public, is not satisfactory ; it has never been so, and there does not seem much prospect of improvement. Indeed, ever since there was such a thing as opinion on this subject, it appears, so far as we can learn from reading, to have vibrated in the profession between something very like intolerance and neglect on the one hand, and an amount of ignorance on the other, which afforded only too great facilities for quackery, about the growth of which those, who have done so much to foster it, were among the foremost to complain.

We read now with horror how the leper was chased forth from society, how the maniac and reputed witch were dealt with, how the venereal were driven from Paris under the threat of being thrown into the river if they did not leave, and of being hanged if they ventured to return. We can scarcely understand physicians refusing to treat phagedænic affections because they were seated on the genitals, or the authorities of a city burning a man alive for practising midwifery.<sup>1</sup> But in point of fact this kind of barbarity, which was always confined to the fanatical part of the community, has rather changed its outward semblance than lost its vitality. The man who has an attack of virtuous horror whenever the subject of spermatorrhœa is mentioned, or professes to be ignorant of its nature or even of its existence, who would ostracise alike the patient suffering from this complaint, and the medical man who so far forgets the dignity of his profession as to prescribe

<sup>1</sup> "In the sixteenth century, Dr. Werth was burnt alive at Hamburg, because he attended a woman in her confinement."—*Edinburgh Med. Journal*, vol. xviii, p. 845.



for it, is in all essentials the same person as the magistrate who in bygone days enforced his orders with the whip and halter, and the physician who refused the aid of his art to the patient with sloughing ulcer of the genitals.

But there are men who are neither intolerant nor ill-informed, men for whose opinions on other questions I entertain a high respect, who conscientiously believe that spermatorrhœa exists only in imagination, that a patient who thinks he is suffering from it really labours under a delusion, and requires nothing more than moral means, particularly exhortations not to think about his complaint, and to read no books on the subject ; that no sensible, properly minded person ever fancies he is affected in this way ; and that the professed victims are essentially timid, lazy, sensual, egotistical people, who require to be sharply told that they should give up such sick fancies. Then why do not these gentlemen lay before the world a few cases successfully treated in this way ? Strictly correct anecdotes and solitary instances of benefit, however valuable they may be in themselves, do not meet the exigencies of the case. I, for one, should be very glad to avail myself of any more simple and speedy method of treatment than that laid down in the following pages, but I should like to see all this excellent advice reduced to a practical shape, and be satisfied of its superior therapeutic value, before adopting it, seeing that my experience is to the very contrary. For whatever may have been the good fortune of others, I have been unlucky enough to meet with such numbers of patients, many of them energetic and resolute in a high degree, who had tried moral means with the result of complete failure, that I have long lost faith in them as usually practised. I do not contest their power to cure those cases of spermatorrhœa which would get well of themselves, but in more advanced forms of the affection, I believe them to be about as thoroughly useless as they would be in any analogous form of disorder which the reader may choose to imagine.

Unless these gentlemen will say point blank that their system of trusting to time and good advice is infallible, there must certainly remain some cases which demand further measures. How these are to be dealt with we must, I presume, find out for ourselves, as no provision is made for such a contingency, which

indeed does not usually appear to be taken into consideration. For such cases then, if for no others, that is supposing the possibility of their happening at all to be admitted, I would suggest medical treatment ; as also occasionally a dispassionate inquiry into the pathology of the disease, and the results of treatment as usually understood ; when I predict it will be found that the advice so confidently spoken of as adequate to cure the disorder entirely fails to relieve a great number of cases, and frequently, where it seems to do good, only suspends the attack, which returns with any great excitement or ill health ; while the urethra is constantly left in a state of hypersensitiveness, which I have met with in a very marked form years after everything that was considered necessary had been done.

If it be merely the ignorance of the lay patient which impels him to consult a physician about such matters, if his alarm be so puerile and groundless, how comes it that medical men, when they think they are affected in this way, feel so much anxiety about it, and so readily submit to treatment ? For that many of them feel and act thus, I am quite in a position to know. I have had the pleasure of prescribing for a pretty large number of such cases, and though I have often succeeded in inoculating a medical patient with a firm belief in steel and injections, I never yet saw one so impressed with the value of moral means, as to suggest that they should be exclusively trusted to in his own case. On the contrary, I have always found that faith in an occasional emission being a natural occurrence, demanding only change of air and chastity of mind and body, vanished at the first emergency ; nor do I speak here of students, in whom the anxiety of inexperience is almost a thing to be looked for, but of men in the full vigour of life and intellect.

The doctrine that spermatorrhœa is a mere phantom, the offspring of a morbid fancy to be discouraged as much as may be, has done and is still continuing to do an amount of harm which it is scarcely an exaggeration to speak of as incalculable ; and the mischief is all the greater because this opinion is upheld by men who justly enjoy the confidence of the profession. But its ill effects are not restricted to the misery it so often inflicts upon the patient. Ingenuity could hardly devise a more efficient stimulus to charla-



tanism of the worst kind ; for it is both natural and inevitable that a man, who finds his case rejected or misunderstood by the physician he consults, will turn to those who so loudly proclaim their readiness and ability to assist him. The moral aspect of the doctrine may be unassailable. I entertain no doubt that it springs from motives of the best kind ; that a really humane wish to save the patient from the consequences of needless alarm lies at the bottom of it, but the result of it has been none the less unsatisfactory. Looked at from a social point of view no worse system could have been adopted, and the effect of it has been a state of things which cannot too soon be ended.

With regard to medical men who may happen to be suffering from these disorders, they know, or at any rate, they can easily learn for themselves, who is the fittest person to consult about their own maladies ; but the position of a layman is very different, and, indeed, in my opinion, so full of difficulties, that, till a radical change is effected, quackery will be as rampant as ever ; for whether the patient's ills are real or imaginary, his mind is so full of them that he will seek for relief at any cost and anywhere. Many years ago a man, whose motives in speaking out so plainly were certainly above suspicion, Dr. Golding Bird, called attention in pointed terms to the urgent nature of the patient's anxiety on this head. "I hardly know," he says,<sup>1</sup> "any state of mind more difficult to treat than that which is so often present in patients who believe themselves to be the subjects of spermatorrhœa. Although, perhaps, there may be no reason to believe that losses of this kind are actually going on, the patient's mind is too generally made wretched, and his happiness blasted, by the iniquitous pictures drawn of the presumed result of spermatorrhœa by the miserable harpies who have so generally taken possession of this department of practice." I heartily endorse every word of this, but it seems to me that Dr. Bird would have taken a more practical mode of preventing patients from being made "wretched" and having their "happiness blasted," if he had inculcated the necessity for carefully studying an affection capable of producing such results.

<sup>1</sup> *On Urinary Deposits* ; 1857, p. 378.

I will suppose that a patient finds or thinks he is suffering from spermatorrhœa, for practically it comes to the same thing, and that he is strong-minded enough, as happens perhaps with one patient in eight or ten, to write to one of the medical journals, asking what he ought to do. I need scarcely say he is pretty certain to receive an answer to the effect that he must avoid advertising quacks, read no works on the subject, and either consult his ordinary medical attendant or the nearest respectable practitioner. Now, I have no wish to sit in judgment on the journals for acting in this way. It might very likely prove difficult enough for them to devise a better system, while to recommend any particular surgeon would lay them open to a charge of favouritism. But for the patient himself, such an answer really amounts to something like a farce, nor can one well imagine any piece of advice less likely to be practically useful. That it is well meant I in no way doubt; what I question is the possibility of giving effect to it. Most persons so situated, especially young men, have not ordinarily a medical attendant; and recommending "any qualified practitioner" means simply referring him to a body of gentlemen who, for the most part, will, if they can, avoid having anything to do with the case. I can say this quite advisedly. I believe there is no malady which men dislike to have under their care so much as spermatorrhœa.

In my opinion there is only one remedy for this state of matters, and that is, for the leaders of professional opinion *openly to recognize the disease*. Until the pathology and treatment of it form a more prominent feature than at present in the regular course of lectures on surgery and in surgical works; until it is no longer tacitly understood that spermatorrhœa is a topic to be mentioned only in a furtive way, or rather to be shunned as much as possible; to be looked upon as a trifle not worth taking into consideration, only suited to those who have nothing better to do, it will remain one of the happiest of hunting-grounds for the charlatan.

That the disease exists to a very great extent, far greater than is generally thought;<sup>1</sup> that it yearly reduces hundreds if not thou-

<sup>1</sup> "Le perdite seminali portano seco gravissime conseguenze; la loro frequenza è assai maggiore di quella che per molti medici si creda."—"Sulle



sands to impotence and all its attendant ills, hypochondria, weariness of life, insanity, and so on; that not only every town, but every village, could show victims of this neglected malady, are facts which I feel assured will not be disputed by those who have looked into the subject. And the remedy for all this misery is to leave matters to take their course! Certainly ingenuity could scarcely contrive a more efficient system for cutting the patient off from all chance of relief, and encouraging those who are ready to plunder him and aggravate his sufferings. Not one patient in fifty would, if he could avoid it, go to a quack; that he is driven to such a step is in a certain degree due to the present state of professional opinion on the subject. As a body the public are powerless in the matter.

Let men try to burke the question as they may, its vitality will defy their efforts. They may fall back upon a policy of inaction, but the evil will still bear its fruits. The sources, from which the canker of quackery is fed here, spring from two of the most powerful passions in the human breast, and though they may be diverted into healthier channels they cannot be dried up. Mere censure is of no avail to put down the charlatan; the law is almost inoperative, and there is little prospect of improved legislation on this head. But were every quack to receive his deserts to-morrow in the shape of penal servitude, would the patient be any the better, and would the nefarious system thrive any the less? I doubt it. The patient would know as little where to apply for aid as he does now; and quackery, if overthrown in this form, would rise only more vigorous than before in another guise, and gather from its temporary suppression new materials for strength and mischief.

Per damna, per cædes, ab ipso  
Ducit opes animumque ferro.

The hook might be more delicately baited, but it would still be thrown to the victim; the web might be better hidden from view, but it would just as infallibly entangle him. Quackery is not easily strangled in the strongest grasp; the only plan I see is to starve it.

polluzioni involontarii. Del dott. Aliprando Moriggia." *Giorn. della R. Acad. di Med. di Torino.* N. 4, 1861.

I believe one reason why medical men dislike so much to treat these cases is, that they see comparatively so few of them. Yet there is no reason whatever why every member of the profession should not be qualified to manage them, seeing that all that can be said about the therapeutics of the disorder may be compressed into a very moderate space. But it seems to me impossible that sound principles of pathology and treatment can be widely diffused unless they are openly taught, and while fundamental errors as to the functions of the organs pass unchecked, and indeed unheeded. The observation has been more than once made,<sup>1</sup> in medical papers, that an emission once a week or so can do no harm; and though this may hold good of a short period in early life, it becomes a very dangerous tenet when applied, as in the nature of things it will almost certainly be, to long-standing cases and a more mature age. Remedies which continually fail, such as the nitrate of silver, the ergot of rye, lupulin, &c., are spoken of by those who recommend them, if not as infallible, yet in a way which leaves little room for any other conclusion. The disease is said by some writers to be so easily curable, that its treatment can scarcely deserve a second thought, whereas it often taxes all the surgeon's resources; and its very nature is frequently so far misunderstood that we hear it spoken of as an affection of the seminal vesicles, which I hope to show have little if anything to do with it.

That the surgeons of a bygone day should have taught such a doctrine as the last would be credible enough. When men like Mason Good and Swediaur exhibit<sup>2</sup> so very indifferent an acquaintance with the subject, although they profess to treat of it, that, with the exception of their classical nosology, they can scarcely be considered very much in advance of the empirics contemporary with them, we can scarcely wonder that those who

<sup>1</sup> See also "A Clinical Lecture on Retention of Urine from Enlargement of the Prostate Gland and Spermatorrhœa in connexion with Irritable Prostate." By John Adams, Esq. *Medical Times*, 1857, vol. i, p. 453; and an excellent letter by Mr. Heath, *Medical Times*, 1859, vol. ii, p. 545.

<sup>2</sup> Should the reader consider that this statement requires qualifying, let him turn to Mason Good's description of his "entonic" and "atomic" spermatorrhœa (*The Study of Medicine*, 1829, vol. v, p. 89), and say if it can be considered the production of a man who really understood the disorder.

sought for information in their writings failed to find it ; but in the present day, when we have such facilities given for the study of physiology, it is scarcely what we should have looked for, and it does not require much sagacity to predict, that till some better methods of observation are introduced, the treatment of spermatorrhœa will scarcely be in a satisfactory position.



## CHAPTER II.

### PATHOLOGY, RESULTS, AND COMPLICATIONS OF SPERMATORRHŒA.

*Classification of Spermatorrhœa.*—Under the name Spermatorrhœa I propose to group all discharges which result from morbid states of the testicles and excretory passages, producing greater expulsion of semen than is compatible with the maintenance of a healthy condition of the organs of generation.

Foremost among the disorders which may be referred to this group stand involuntary seminal emissions, which constitute a large proportion of the cases we are consulted about by spermatorrhœa patients, and to which I think the name spermatorrhœa ought to be confined. Next we have gleet of the seminal vesicles, in which, especially when accompanied by straining on account of constipation, we may find occasional expulsion of a few spermatozoa. Thirdly, there may be an imperceptible draining away of semen, in which, without any effort, a small quantity of this fluid gradually makes its way into the bladder, and is found in the lowest layers of the urine. Mr. de Meric, then president of the Harveian Society, in a discussion on a paper on spermatorrhœa by Mr. Gascoyen,<sup>1</sup> clearly stated that he considered this disease to be spermatorrhœa; and that whatever might be said to the contrary, the disease (spermatorrhœa) did exist and in this form; but inasmuch as seminal emissions are a real, serious, and sometimes obstinate disease, while this affection is slight, and never likely to affect either the health or the vital powers, I submit that the classification above is the better one. Lastly we find, not as integral parts of the disorder, but ranked by persons in the same category, certain affections of the prostate resulting in hypersecretion of mucus, and discharge of mucus from Cowper's glands, the urethra and bladder: disorders which, when they have resulted,

<sup>1</sup> Dec. 7, 1871.

or when the patient fancies they have resulted, from masturbation, often exert, through the mind, a most injurious influence over the virile powers.

Whatever objections may be made, I think the word spermatorrhœa ought to be restricted to involuntary seminal emissions. They form not only by far the greatest number of the cases of this class, but they are infinitely of more importance than all the rest put together. The name has been objected to, and we have been told that the term ought to be applied to cases in which the semen trickles away insensibly—a disease of the rarest nature, and to which the term spermatorrhœa is not a whit more suited than it is to emissions, the verb *peu* expressing quite as much the force of a stream as a trickling. Lastly, the arrangement I have suggested offers the advantages of collecting several allied and often contemporaneous disorders into one focus, with a prominent and easily recognized affection as a centre round which they may be arranged.

*Divisions of Spermatorrhœa.*—This disorder may then be divided into—1. Nocturnal emissions; 2. Diurnal emissions, forming together spermatorrhœa proper; and 3. the complaints just spoken of. It may perhaps save some trouble if I at once admit that this arrangement is crude and unscientific enough; but it is to be borne in mind that the object of the work is practical utility, and that I wish to say what I know of the subject in the simplest and most intelligible form. Dr. Albers, of Bonn, who has paid great attention to the subject, recognizes three leading forms of spermatorrhœa. 1. Simply an abnormal discharge of seminal fluid. 2. The same associated with morbid changes in the seminal receptacles and ducts, and in the bulbous urethra and prostate. 3. Cases presenting a combination of the two foregoing conditions. I cannot say that I quite understand the necessity for the last division; in all practical points it appears to be comprised in the second.

1. *Nocturnal emissions* constitute by far the greater part of the cases we are called upon to treat. When not severe or long continued, they seldom require more than cold bathing, out-of-door exercise, abstraction of the thoughts from the subject, and mild aperients combined with tonics. There are many cases in which



it is difficult to say whether they call for any treatment or not ; but as a broad rule it may be stated that they do so whenever the patient feels worse after them, and that in men who have reached the age of three and four and twenty, anything beyond one emission a month requires attention. I know this statement has been impugned, but I am quite prepared to abide by it. I did not put it forward till I considered I had quite sufficient evidence in my hands to justify me in doing so. I may be wrong in the conclusion I have ventured to draw, but I feel warranted in adhering to it.

Among those who have contested this view is Dr. Campbell Black.<sup>1</sup> He admits the difficulty of drawing the line of demarcation, but he entirely denies the justness of the view which I have taken. "If it be asserted," he says, "on the one hand, as has been done by writers on the subject, that more than one involuntary emission in a month, in continent persons, constitutes spermatorrhœa, then I assert most unhesitatingly that there is not one continent young man in fifty in Great Britain who is not suffering from spermatorrhœa !" He would, therefore, limit interference to those cases where the emissions occasion lassitude, fancied or real debility, or mental worry, and occur more frequently than once in ten days or a fortnight.

The first part of the paragraph is a specimen of the way in which assertions are made in this work. The whole paragraph contains as many errors as statements. It must be impossible for any person to compute the number of continent young men in Great Britain, as this presupposes a personal and individual examination of all the male population of this age, who must number at least two or three millions. It is simply out of the question that any person can of his own knowledge know what their real condition actually is. Any conclusion here must be a mere matter of inference, and not of positive assertion. But, according to my experience, inference does not support Dr. Black's assertion, but quite the contrary. Of the patients who, during the last five and twenty years, have consulted me for affections of this nature, real or fancied, for gleet, gonorrhœa, syphilis,

<sup>1</sup> *Functional Diseases of the Renal, Urinary, and Reproductive Organs ;* 1872, p. 198.



&c., a very large proportion were not troubled with emissions at all. I have likewise had considerable opportunities of examining young men suffering from a complaint which is often supposed to have some connexion with seminal emissions and improper practices—I mean acne—but here, too, I met with the same response. Most of these patients were habitually continent.

What might be considered as just something more than one emission a month, say merely for the sake of precision two emissions in that space of time, may not do a strong, healthy, continent man any harm, or at all events any very noticeable harm, but more delicate persons often complain of lassitude even after this. If we knew that we could always keep the disease at this level, if we could feel assured that sooner or later the powers of the constitution would step in, and remedy this defect in the working of the functions, there would perhaps be no necessity for ordering anything particular in the way of treatment. But the fact is that we can do nothing of the kind. I have traced back far too many cases of spermatorrhoea to neglect of a period when the patient was not labouring under anything more than an emission every two or three weeks, to feel any confidence in the natural efforts of the system. I hold the latter in utter distrust here, and have repeatedly endeavoured to show that the procreative structures have in themselves very little power to throw off disease. While no disturbing circumstances occur, the patient may go on for years without getting much worse, may even get a little better; but the first bad illness or shock, the first long, hard strain on mind or body, will only too often increase the number of discharges to one, two, or three a week; and then the patient begins to appreciate the value of the statement that one or two in a month can do him no harm.

But irrespective of ill health or accidents, of any overwork of mind or body, it is certain that some men are born with a strong constitutional predisposition to this kind of thing; that these emissions, even when not at all frequent, tend, if neglected, to become in process of years more frequent, and any medical man, who may have adopted the expectant theory, can rest assured that, if his patients have sufficient confidence in him to remain long enough under his care, some of the cases which he considers at first unnecessary to treat will, without assistance and of their

own natural impulse, gravitate into a condition requiring all the aid he can give them.

Some persons will cavil at this and say that, even if well founded, it is only calculated to occasion unnecessary alarm. The answer is, that these are people practically unacquainted with the disease. They may have heard about it, may possibly have treated a case or two, or even have gone so far as to read part of a book on the subject; but they have never studied the matter, they have never traced or tried to trace its results to their true cause. They really know no more about it intrinsically than they do about the diseases afflicting the inhabitants of Jupiter or Neptune, and their opinions are of about as much value in the one case as in the other. I am quite at a loss to see why it should be good practice to nip one disease in the bud, and leave another to continue its ravages unchecked till it gets beyond mastering; why it should be thought quite right to remove a scirrhus tumour so soon as ever its nature is made evident, and yet allow seminal emissions to go on till they injure both mind and body.

During the last twenty-five years I have always had medical men under my care for one or other of the complaints which I have classed under the name of spermatorrhœa. I have asked most of these gentlemen to say, now that their attention was fixed on their own cases, if they could detect any exaggeration in what I had stated; begging them to understand that all I cared for was to get at the truth, and that I wished to hear their opinions and not the reflection of my own. The answer has generally been that they knew only too well there was nothing overdrawn in the picture. Some of them were candid enough to admit, that if they had not suffered in their own persons they would have thought the colouring rather too sombre, but that they had really never reflected on the subject. They were, however, convinced enough by this time that the discharges, which they had so lightly treated at one time, were really all the while doing them mischief of a very serious nature.

If, then, anything that I could have been silly enough to say on this head be simply calculated to alarm laymen, surely it ought, if so unfounded, to have no sort of influence with medical men. If hundreds of educated gentlemen, practising their profession, and having their observation sharpened to the highest



degree by the study of their own cases, recognize as truth what we are told is a gross exaggeration, their medical education can have done little to qualify them for the exigencies which they are called on to encounter. If an emission once a fortnight be a slight, manageable, and transient evil, it is strange that they should throw up practice, injure their prospects, and break off marriage engagements in order to free themselves from the incubus of the disease. Yet they systematically do these things with their eyes open, and for affections of which this has long been the only sign. Is it possible that both sorts of patients are wrong, and that one or two self-constituted judges, who may or may not have seen a few cases of spermatorrhœa, are right? Is it in any degree probable that many hundreds of patients, knowing nothing of each other, would describe separately a particular result as flowing from a given cause, and yet one and all be in error? Yet scores of patients, medical and non-medical, do this every year.

I could fortify myself here with the opinion of Trousseau,<sup>1</sup> who has seen a good deal of this complaint, but I prefer to do nothing of the kind, and to be alone responsible for the inaccuracy of the statement. After carefully weighing all that has been said against what I put forth, I deliberately elect to encounter the censure which it may bring with it, and appeal to impartial clinical observation in support of the view.

An opinion prevails, as most of my readers are aware, among medical men, that a few emissions in youth do good instead of harm. It is difficult to understand how an unnatural evacuation can do good, except in the case of unnatural congestion. I have, however, convinced myself that the principle is wrong. Lads never really feel better for emissions; they very often feel decidedly worse. Occasionally they may fancy there is a sense of relief, but it is very much the same sort of relief that a drunkard feels from a dram. In early life the stomach may be repeatedly overloaded with impunity, but I suppose few would contend that overloading was therefore good. The fact is that emissions are invariably more or less injurious; not always visibly so in youth, nor susceptible of being assessed as to the damage inflicted by any given number of them, but still contributing, each in its turn, a mite towards the exhaustion and debility which the

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures on Clinical Medicine.* By A. Trousseau; 1870, vol. iii, p. 445.

patient will one day complain of. At the same time it is very far from my wish to tell the patient that, because he has an occasional emission, he is suffering from spermatorrhœa. Equally I should look upon it as quite unnecessary for a patient to continue the treatment when the emissions have become reduced to one occasionally. I do not seek to extend the bounds of the disease beyond what I have stated, and think that in both cases the powers of the constitution and the effects of reliable advice should first of all have a fair trial.

Perhaps the reader does not sufficiently appreciate the necessity for maintaining my position against so formidable an antagonist as Dr. Black, and therefore I will explain. This gentleman, though opposed to almost every person who has investigated the affections of which he treats, is an infallible authority on every part of the subject; and perhaps never more so than when contradicting himself, which he is somewhat apt to do. Whether "musing on the banks of the hallowed Molendinar" (p. 24), or "opining" on the cause of enuresis, there can be no appeal from his decisions. He has begun a righteous crusade against, not only the iniquity of persons like myself, but also "the votaries of instrumental prostitution" (p. 228), "the fecula of quackery," and "senile imbecility." While other writers either exaggerate or depreciate the importance of spermatorrhœa, he alone holds the golden mean. It is pleasing to reflect that, at a time when, according to Dr. Black, quackery and imposture of the worst class abound in every rank of the profession (pp. 67, 228, 273), except those shut up in garrets (p. 67), a man has arisen who is purity itself, and has the moral courage to proclaim that he is so. He alone can "reconcile morality with physiology" (p. 267), and the man who will not do so according to his method is "a fool," "a bigot" or "a coward" (p. 301).

To those who, like myself, have always believed that medical men are, with few exceptions, truthful and honourable; and that Scotchmen, while ever among the foremost in the ranks of science, are, considering their strong religious feelings, singularly free from the fault of affecting such high-flown immaculacy, and launching sermons and excommunications under the guise of professional works, and of imputing the worst motives to every person who may happen to differ from them, this sort of thing must be rather



a surprise ; whether it will be an agreeable one I leave it for them to say. Should any of my readers think I am unjustly assailing Dr. Black, I ask them to read his work ; and I don't know that I can well wish it a worse fate than to be read by a person of common discernment.

2. *Diurnal emissions*, that is to say, emissions of semen, almost invariably occur as a result and complication of night discharges. They are not very common,<sup>1</sup> and are generally seen in nervous excitable persons, though this is by no means a constant rule. In some persons suffering from nocturnal emissions the organs become so irritable that the act of caressing a dog or a horse, prolonged riding in a carriage, or contact of the perinæum and buttocks with any soft, bulky body, causes an imperfect erection followed by a seminal emission. I have seen several undoubted instances of this, and in one patient under my care the tendency to emissions had become so strong, apparently in consequence of some strong preparation of cantharides and capsicum having been given him when suffering from spermatorrhœa, that he could not travel even a short distance in a railway train, unless when standing, without having an emission. In the upright position he always escaped. He told me that on one occasion, while coming from Brighton to London by the morning express, he had had two emissions solely in consequence of having to remain seated ; and it is to be remembered that these were unmistakeable ejaculations of semen. A very similar case occurred in my practice a little more than a year ago.

But under the head of diurnal emissions are included emissions of mere mucus, which often trouble and alarm such patients more than the others. In some persons there is only a weeping of mucus ; in others this is ejaculated, or at least propelled to the mouth of the urethra, in the form of a slight gush of fluid, often attended by a very disagreeable sensation, and followed, when severe and of long standing, by considerable prostration. Some patients have several of these in a day. I have examined many specimens of this discharge without finding any spermatozoa, though it is occasionally loaded with inflammation corpuscles.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Dicenta examined 400 persons, 203 of whom suffered from spermatorrhœa, and found not an instance of day emissions among them.—*Studien und Erfahrungen über die Samenverlüste.*

The urethra is often red and tender, but M. Lallemand's account of the condition of it is ridiculously overdrawn. He speaks of the frantic dread patients entertain of a bougie being passed, and their cries of agony at the operation; phenomena which I have never witnessed, though I have examined far more cases than M. Lallemand appears to have seen when he wrote his work. Indeed, M. Lallemand grounded his treatment of this disorder on the dogma that seminal emissions are kept up by the highly irritable state of the urethra near the mouths of the ejaculatory ducts, a view which certainly only holds good to a very limited extent. Mr. Phillips also advocated<sup>1</sup> this view. Mr. Gascoyen<sup>2</sup> was of much the same opinion; he says that if the irritable condition of the nerves continue, emissions may become so frequent and scanty as to occur almost without the knowledge of the person until they prove a source of injury to him. I have never seen this in the worst cases of day emissions; at night some few patients suffer in this way, but never, according to my experience, to any extent.

*Pathology of Spermatorrhœa.*—Dr. Carpenter gives<sup>3</sup> the following explanation of one great point in the pathology of this affection. "The secretion of the seminal fluid," he says, "being very much under the control of the nervous system, will be increased by the continual direction of the mind towards objects which awaken the sexual propensity. Thus, if intercourse be very frequent, a much larger quantity will altogether be produced, although the amount emitted at each period will be less."

I cannot say that I quite understand what Dr. Carpenter means by stating that the secretions are very much under the *control of the nervous system*. Such obscure expressions as these have ever been the bane of medicine. A great deal appears to be said, but when we come to look for the sense, the pith of the matter, for something tangible, we find little beyond mere words and a *caput mortuum*. Secretions are so far under the *influence of impressions made upon the nervous system*, that violent mental agitation will

<sup>1</sup> *Medical Gazette*, vol. xxxi, p. 452.

<sup>2</sup> *Brit. Med. Journal*; 1872, vol. i, p. 94.

<sup>3</sup> *The Principles of Human Physiology*. By W. B. Carpenter, M.D., F.R.S.; 1869, p. 827.

increase some of them, such as perspiration, tears, &c. ; arrest the expulsion of others, as that of the bile when jaundice is brought on by fright ; or possibly interfere with the quantity or quality of the secretion in a third set, as in the case of dyspepsia produced by excessive anxiety, and so on. But I have yet to learn that any amount of mental activity directed to the liver, stomach, or pancreas will increase the secretion of bile or gastric or pancreatic juice, indeed, I am rather sceptical as to whether highly organized products can be increased beyond the normal amount, that is to say, as regards their more important constituents, although, of course, the mass of water, mucus, &c., may be raised to an almost indefinite quantity ; and yet this is what Dr. Carpenter's words may be fairly construed to mean if applied to other organs than the testis. Judging from what I have seen, and especially from noticing that in many persons the excitement from connexion, in which the natural stimulus of the organs is brought into play, is so much less than when an emission occurs, when the organs are under the influence of an unnatural excitement, I should be inclined to assign much more importance to the nervous exhaustion than to the mere loss of semen,<sup>1</sup> the waste of the important constituents of which is possibly not much greater than in health ; and if it be urged that we find this prostration when the semen is simply flowing away in the urine, or thought to be so, I reply that that is due to previous excitement.

M. Trousseau seems to think<sup>2</sup> that an emission causes no more loss of power than a single connexion. I must protest against this statement. When both are unfrequent the difference is perhaps so slight as not to admit of computation ; but if we can rely on the statements of patients the balance when they occur often is quite in favour of connexion. Men who, for the time at least, feel rather relieved than otherwise by the latter, constantly com-

<sup>1</sup> This opinion is quite in accordance with that expressed in a very careful article on the subject in the *Medico-Chirurgical Review* (1864, Jan., p. 163), a journal which ever honourably distinguished itself by its efforts to secure a proper recognition of this disease ; with the opinion of Mr. Curling (*Diseases of the Testis*. By T. B. Curling, F.R.S. ; 1866, p. 454), and with that of Dr. Humphry. *A System of Surgery*. Edited by T. Holmes, M.A. Cantab., vol. iv, p. 609.

*Op. citat.*, vol. iii, p. 458.

plain of headache, prostration, and weariness after a single emission. The stimulus is wholly natural in one; quite the opposite in the other, and *ab initio* more exhausting.

And I must protest quite as strongly against the doctrine taught by John Hunter and repeated by Sir James Paget, that a voluntary pollution does no more harm than connexion, which I regard as a complete error. I consider that Swediaur had Hunter fairly on the hip when he attacked him about this, and it seems most strange to me, that, if there be any truth in the doctrine, the experience of patients should invariably lead them to an opposite conclusion. Of all those who had really attended to this part of the subject, not one whom I questioned ever failed to draw a wide distinction between the effects of the natural and the unnatural forms of emission. A distinct, unmistakeable tendency to emissions is sometimes set up in excitable persons by a very moderate practice of masturbation, even for a few months, whereas nothing of the kind is induced by connexion. The latter may not have any curative influence, but it has no power of exasperating the disposition to spermatorrhœa. Looked at from a moral point of view, the doctrine is a still greater mistake than it is pathologically. Even if it were a truth, it ought to be as much shunned as the most pernicious error; for it carries with it as great a capacity for mischief as any maxim ever yet invented for the express encouragement of evil practices.

"M. Lallemand," says Mr. Acton, "thinks that the brain has a great influence as a cause in inciting or exciting spermatorrhœa." I quote the phrase from Mr. Acton's work<sup>1</sup> because, from his reproducing it without comment, I presume that he endorses or at any rate understands it. I confess I do not understand it. If M. Lallemand meant that some particular conformation of the brain coincides with a tendency to spermatorrhœa, that great anatomical development of it tends to produce or repress this disorder, why did he not say so? If he meant that great development of the thinking powers, of what in short is understood by "genius," fosters spermatorrhœa, then I submit with all deference that he is wrong, and that biography affords no warrant for such a supposition, for I do not consider the revelations of Rousseau any criterion; indeed I do not think them fit to be quoted for

<sup>1</sup> *On Diseases of the Urinary and Generative Organs*; 1851, p. 233.



any purpose whatever. It is not at all improbable that Swift suffered from this complaint,<sup>1</sup> as also that Johnson did;<sup>2</sup> but with these exceptions I have found nothing in the lives of more than two hundred of our greatest men, which evidences the least connexion between these two kinds of disposition. Judging from the context, however, M. Lallemand possibly meant that this great influence of the brain is exhibited in those persons who, when children, manifest a precocious disposition towards venereal propensities; though I should have thought he might as well have invoked the influence of the brain in the case of those early predisposed to chorea or neuralgia.

I am inclined to say that the physique of persons constitutionally disposed to spermatorrhœa cannot be defined with any great strictness. No doubt a great many of these patients are excitable, nervous, delicate people, with a strong taste for sedentary pursuits and study; bashful and sensitive by nature, and endowed with a precocious disposition towards the other sex; but there are plenty of exceptions. I have seen some suffering very severely from the disorder with every variety of physical conformation,—tall, bony men; strong, square-set, burly people; often persons of a most apathetic temperament, and no small proportion of men distinguished for excelling in active outdoor sports.

Involuntary emissions seem to me to arise from an irritable state of the testicles, vasa deferentia, and common seminal or ejaculatory ducts; a state which might in some instances be looked upon as closely akin to a local epilepsy. Dr. Humphry says<sup>3</sup> the real seat of the malady appears to be in the prostatic parts of the urethra more distinctly than in any other portion of the generative apparatus. Lallemand and Curling also found this part swollen and injected in some bad cases; and no doubt it is often far more tender than it ought to be. Dr. Dicenta considers<sup>4</sup> that the seat of the disorder is in the muscular and contractile tissues of the ejaculatory apparatus, partly engendered by self-indulgence, partly brought on by other causes, such as gonorrhœa, constitutional tendency, neuralgia, &c. Whether any part

<sup>1</sup> *Works of Jonathan Swift, D.D., with Notes and a Life of the Author.* By Sir Walter Scott; 1824, vol. i, p. 240, &c.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Samuel Johnson.* By James Boswell; 1818, vol. i, p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> *Holmes's System of Surgery*, vol. iv, p. 606.

<sup>4</sup> *Deutsche Klinik*; 1857, S. 179.

of the urethra is affected or not seems to me a subordinate question, as it is quite certain that we do not find irritation of this membrane in many cases, and only after the disorder has existed a considerable time in others. It may yield too, and yet the spermatorrhœa remain bad. This disposition appears to extend itself, in obedience to some fixed law regulating what I will venture, for the moment, to define vaguely as the "proportion of constitutions,"<sup>1</sup> to the par vagum, sympathetic and brain, and this in certain ill-recognized cycles. Thus in every hundred cases of spermatorrhœa, the surgeon will find a certain proportion in which symptoms of breathlessness and anxiety after exertion show themselves, another number in which the digestion is affected, and a third set where the brain is disturbed; or there may be any complication of these. The irritability in the testes may be set up by any slight causes in some persons, and when once established, a still slighter cause may aggravate it. I have elsewhere<sup>2</sup> tried to show that there is pretty good ground for assuming that these organs may be affected by the electricity in the atmosphere to the extent of taking on inflammation, and it is certain that such disturbance in the electricity as precedes and accompanies thunderstorms, the equinox, close, muggy weather (particularly in early winter), and some other conditions not very well understood, will bring on emissions in persons liable to this disorder. Similarly, poisonous east winds, particularly in spring, will often induce an attack. For many years I have been in the habit of requesting persons to keep a calendar of their emissions, so as to see if the number were diminishing, and have repeatedly noticed that they reported such facts.

Again, it is certain that in some persons any great irritation set up in the brain, muscles, nerves, or stomach will produce an emission. Much anxiety and fatigue have this effect; so have neuralgia, dyspepsia, headache, catarrh, and diarrhœa, or perhaps it would be more correct to say, that the same perturbing cause

<sup>1</sup> If 10,000 people were taken in any part of England, we should find a certain proportion disposed to, or suffering from, certain diseases; as gout, rheumatism, skin diseases. If 10,000 persons suffering from skin diseases were taken anywhere, we should find a certain number suffering from eczema, lepra, acne, &c. This may illustrate what I mean by the law of "proportion of constituents."

<sup>2</sup> *On the Treatment of Gonorrhœa without Specifics*; 1876, p. 197



produces an outbreak of spermatorrhœa and an attack of one of these complications. Emissions, long continued, cause weariness and indigestion, so that we have two reflex actions, *the one the very counterpart of the other*; unless indeed the suggestion just offered, that it is the same cause which induces the two sets of symptoms, be accepted. This may appear very bad physiology; but with that I have nothing to do. My business is to deal with facts: theory I leave to those who are fond of it. I presume it is the fact of spermatorrhœa arising from such causes that has induced some surgeons to look upon it as merely one of the protean forms of nervous disorder; but what possible practical benefit they expected to arise from simply calling it nervousness, I am at a loss to see. The results of doing so are often lamentable enough to the sufferer.

A patient suffering from emissions goes to a physician, and tells him that he feels less able to take exercise than before, that his faculties are impaired, and his memory bad; that he has a heavy oppressive feeling in his head, a general sensation of being muddled in the head, or a stuffed-up feeling as if he were going to have a fit. Sometimes there is a discharge of mucus from the bladder and urethra after making water. Such patients have often been healthy, temperate, and active. Sometimes the erections have been lately much less perfect than they were. The physician tells him he is nervous, recommends tonics, change of air, rest, &c. The patient finds that tonics set up irritation, change of air makes him worse, and that the gloom and nervous sensations will not allow him to rest. He feels that he would be better at work, if he could bear occupation. Then he goes to some eminent surgeon, and tells him that in addition to the other symptoms he has got spermatorrhœa, having derived this new fact from the discharges spoken of, and suddenly recollecting that he had committed masturbation at school, and that he had heard somewhere that imperceptible seminal emissions occasion such symptoms as he is labouring under. But the surgeon does not believe in spermatorrhœa, so he looks on the disorder as merely nervous, tells the patient there is no such disease as spermatorrhœa, and sends him on his way sorrowing. Perhaps he cauterizes him, or passes a bougie, both operations being, if unaccompanied by proper treatment, utterly useless, if not injurious. Very likely



he advises him to have connexion, at least I know that scores of patients have told me this was the answer they received. If the patient try this and find himself unable to effect it, he is certain to be seriously and unnecessarily alarmed; if he succeed, he will go on substituting one form of emission for another, till the first period of continence warns him, by a return of the discharges, that he is no nearer a cure than he was. Then the patient wanders from one practitioner to another, and if he do not meet with some one who will grapple thoroughly with the disorder, purge his bowels well, blister the perinæum and penis, put him on proper diet, and inject the urethra, &c., till the nocturnal emissions are checked, he will go on injuring his health and worrying about his symptoms, till he makes a shipwreck of himself. I am putting no imaginary case, I merely describe what I have heard scores of times.

Great susceptibility to the action of the atmosphere seems to illustrate very well the disposition we have just examined; and if the surgeon will attend to the symptoms patients often complain of at the time of the equinox and in stifling thundery weather, he will be able to judge for himself. Patients suffering in this way say they are attacked by an indescribable kind of excitement which they cannot resist; there is often great irritability of the urethra, a sensation as if the canal were stuffed full of mucus, a tired aching feeling in the back, frequent desire to make water, often almost total loss of appetite. Should diarrhœa and sickness set in the patient may escape, but if they do not he is almost certain to have one emission at least, probably two, three, or four. To those who have examined the subject, this statement will not appear in any way startling.

*Results of Spermatorrhœa.*—Among the common but less serious symptoms induced by this disorder, when of long continuance, may be ranked inability to sustain fatigue, mental or bodily, or to follow up a fixed train of thought, some loss of memory not infrequent. Headache is not so common as might be supposed; but patients often complain of a sensation as if a blow on the back of the head had been sustained. Neuralgia is frequent enough, and commonly attacks the face or head; but is perhaps more a complication than an effect. Many patients suffer from pain after eating, with considerable tenderness of the epigastrium and a sense

of fulness, eructations, flatulence, heartburn, acidity, and excessive sleepiness after dinner : such patients are generally easily fatigued. Sleeplessness at night is sometimes mentioned ; disturbed sleep, with continuous vivid dreaming, is not uncommon ; or the sleep may be heavy and unrefreshing. Giddiness and breathlessness occur sometimes ; not more, I think, than in other forms of exhaustion. Some degree of palpitation is not unfrequently complained of. In a great many cases the urinary secretion is disturbed, or the bladder is irritable ; phosphate and oxalate of lime are common.

Pain in the back may result from or complicate spermatorrhœa (for it is not always easy to assign its exact position to each symptom) and prove very obstinate. A gentleman who had spent part of his life in India, and who said he consulted me rather for this unpleasant symptom than for the emissions, assured me that he had then suffered from it for sixteen years, and that it not only prevented his taking proper recreation, but debarred him from any exercise which required him to stand even for a short time. The urethra is sometimes rendered highly irritable by constant repetition of the discharges. I have known this set up to such a degree, that passing the tube of the injecting syringe, or only a bougie four inches down the urethra, has brought on an emission. Burning in the urethra is sometimes complained of, and a patient occasionally describes morbid sensibility of this canal as a most distressing symptom. Two patients described a dragging sensation in the perinæum, as if the whole region, with the corresponding portion of the urethra, was being lifted up. Annoying pain too in the perinæum, not unfrequently accompanied by latent irritability of the bladder, and muscular pains in the thighs and groins, torment some patients, even strong well-grown men, very much. Dull aching of the testicles and even some degree of orchitis may be present.

The more serious effects are amaurotic and epileptiform symptoms,<sup>1</sup> epilepsy,<sup>2</sup> phthisis, insanity, paralysis,<sup>3</sup> and death.<sup>4</sup> I have

<sup>1</sup> *Holmes's System of Surgery*, vol. iv, p. 604.

<sup>2</sup> *The Practice of Medicine*. By T. H. Tanner ; 1869, vol. ii, p. 212. "Connection of Spermatorrhœa and Epilepsy," by Dr. Russell, *Provincial Medical and Surgical Journal*, 1860.

<sup>3</sup> *Holmes's System of Surgery*, *loc. cit.* ; also *Lectures on the Principles and Practice of Physic*. By Thomas Watson, M.D. ; 1857, vol. i, p. 548.

<sup>4</sup> *Morriggia, Op. citat.*



not observed such results myself, with the exception of insanity, of which I have seen several instances ; but there seems no doubt about the facts themselves. Epilepsy appears clearly to have ensued in several cases from excessive masturbation. Mr. M'Dougall saw<sup>1</sup> three instances of this ; and Sir Thomas Watson speaks of it<sup>2</sup> as a very frequent result. Dr. Durkee mentions<sup>3</sup> epileptiform convulsions and idiocy as results of masturbation ; and Dr. Lisle, medical inspector of one of the french lunatic asylums, states<sup>4</sup> that spermatorrhœa is a frequent cause of insanity, that the form of derangement is easily recognized, and that all treatment, directed solely against the disease of the brain, is powerless here ; whereas the affection is instantly and rapidly cured if the discharges be arrested, unless indeed the case has already gone on to paralysis and dementia. I am quite satisfied that Dr. Lisle is right, that there is a form of derangement peculiar to these cases, and that, till the emissions are checked no good can be done to the mental affection. I have treated several patients in whom this affection was coming on. Some have been cured, though not quite so quickly as by Dr. Lisle, while, in a very few, symptoms of mental disturbance, accompanied often by great gloominess and irascibility, have followed to such an extent that restraint has been necessary.

Very appalling pictures of the results of spermatorrhœa have been drawn by some writers. Mental wandering, incoherence of ideas, peculiar grazing sensation occasioned by the passage of the urine, pain extending from the neck of the bladder to the glans penis and margin of anus, shivering, palpitations, sinking sensations, gastric and intestinal symptoms, diarrhœa, anæsthesia, frightful sensations like those occasioned by electricity, amblyopia or diplopia ending in amaurosis, impairment of hearing, perversion of sense of taste and smell, pains in the head and vertigo. It is scarcely to be marvelled at that any one so direly afflicted should fall, as we are told he does, "into a state of extreme wasting;" that his skin "acquires a yellowish, leaden hue;" that his eyes "become encircled with a blue ring;" and that he winds up by

<sup>1</sup> Lallemand, *Practical Treatise on Spermatorrhœa*. Translated and Edited by Henry J. M'Dougall ; 1847, p. xlii.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. citat.*, vol. i, p. 649.

<sup>3</sup> *A Treatise on Gonorrhœa and Syphilis* ; 1864, p. 124.

<sup>4</sup> *Med. Times and Gaz.* ; 1861, vol. i, p. 608.



falling into a state of "brutish stupidity," insanity, and locomotor ataxy.<sup>1</sup> The wonder is that his spirit does not take flight altogether long before matters reach a crisis like this.

But for the foot-note appended the reader might fancy I was quoting from the description of some pestilent charlatan. Quite the contrary. These are the descriptions given by learned professors. Coming before the world with all the prestige that schools and academies can lend, they of course at once become current, and thus do far more mischief than any nauseous pamphlet circulated by a quack. The most simple-minded patient more than half distrusts the bare-faced exaggerations of the empiric; credulous as he may be, he still knows that he is devouring stuff got up to frighten him; but if he have the misfortune to read such a description coming from the chair of a professor, he gives up his case as lost. The names of Trousseau and Lallemand, from whom M. Trousseau seems to have drawn his inspiration, are enough in themselves. As to medical readers, if they be not familiar with the subject, they must be misled; if they happen to be familiar with it, they can scarcely fail to condemn the introduction of such imaginary and distorted pictures into what ought to be the domain of sober truth.

It is proper to discriminate here carefully between two very different classes of cases; those chiefly due to mere continuance of the emissions, and those arising principally from long persistence in masturbation. When seminal emissions have begun merely from constitutional tendency to them, or when the odious practice of self-abuse has only been carried so far as to set them going, we rarely have, as a result, more than some, and often only the slighter, of the symptoms mentioned at page 28. Dyspepsia is not unfrequent; mania of the kind described by Dr. Lisle occurs, though very rarely; great depression of spirits, exhaustion and inability to fix the attention, are not unfrequently complained of. But generally, in all the more serious results, masturbation plays a most important part. Such complications as epilepsy and paralysis are, I believe, always,—mania generally,—more due to it than to the emissions it sets up.

Dr. Erskine Mason speaks<sup>2</sup> of chronic inflammation of the

<sup>1</sup> Trousseau, *Op. citat.*, vol. iii, p. 455.

<sup>2</sup> *American Journal of Syphilography and Dermatology*, vol. i, p. 290.

prostate as being brought on by masturbation. He describes it as marked by sense of fulness and weight about the rectum. When digital examination is made the gland is found considerably enlarged, somewhat painful, and projecting into the bowel; the common signs, in short, of this state. He also adds a discharge of stringy mucus, increased by hard fæces passing over the prostate, frequent calls to void urine, inability to empty the bladder without straining, uneasy sensations in the region of the groin, weight and pain in the perinæum, sometimes also irritability about the anus, and painful defæcations, low spirits, dyspepsia, languor, and headache. I suppose we are all of us familiar with the local symptoms here as results of gonorrhœa; as sequelæ of masturbation they are in their entirety quite unknown to me. I have seen some of them, such as sense of weight and fulness in the region of the prostate gland, in a mild form in some obstinate cases of emissions, and I need scarcely say that the general symptoms accompany prostration induced by many other causes.

*Prognosis of Spermatorrhœa.*—1. When the patient is resolute and under thirty-five years of age, when the disease has not reached a great height, and has not induced structural change, I believe the case is always curable, and generally pretty easily; yet even under these conditions the disease will sometimes manifest intense obstinacy, resisting the most careful treatment for months or even years. In all I have seen six of those cases, and I speak here of patients who gave treatment fair play in every respect. The first patient was a tall, muscular man, twenty-nine years old, a person of unusual resolution; he was circumcised without moving a muscle or uttering a word. After more than two years the emissions had only been reduced to about one in ten days in place of one a week, a farther improvement being two intervals of peace of about five weeks each. The patient then spent several months in travelling, with little benefit. The second case was that of a remarkably strong, square built man, twenty-seven years of age. At the end of two years there were still frequent outbreaks of two or three emissions a week. The patient now went abroad for a year, but came home little if any better, and the emissions got worse again directly after his return. After this the patient, quite tired out, left the country, but about two years after sent a message to say that he was quite well. Third



case, patient twenty-six years old, ruddy but not very strong. At the end of two years emissions still continued at the rate of four to six a month, and at the end of three years one in every eight or ten days. Fourth patient, thirty-one years old, never very strong; at end of quite three years emissions still occurred every eight or ten days, with very occasionally an interval of twelve to eighteen days. Two long voyages effected no improvement. Fifth patient, a very powerful young fellow, living in the country, extremely fond of athletic sports. During the first eighteen months of treatment the case got almost constantly worse, the emissions increasing from an average of two a week to ten or twelve and sometimes even sixteen or seventeen a month, forty-five occurring once in three months, and it took quite eighteen months more to reduce them to one in ten or twelve days. Sixth patient, twenty-six years old. Fourteen months elapsed before a decided reliable change for the better set in.

2. Generally, the younger the patient the quicker and easier the cure. But sometimes the reverse is met with. I have known the disease prove very tiresome in a patient under twenty years of age, and I have seen a man of seven-and-twenty cured in a month by a simple prescription of steel and aperients.

3. So long as there are even occasionally perfect erections, and the emissions awaken the patient, there is every ground for hope, and little cause for alarm, if the patient will attend to the case.

4. When patients have reached the age of thirty-five or thereabouts, when the emissions have continued for many years, when the interval between them is never very long, when there seems a strong constitutional tendency to the disorder, shown by its being called into activity by a very slight cause, and when there is a great deal of constitutional or acquired weakness, particularly with a tendency to dyspepsia, neuralgia, and cerebral symptoms, I believe the cure to be no easy matter, and one that taxes all the resources of the surgeon and the resolution of the patient; indeed I suppose it was principally cases of this class which decided the opinions of men like Dicenta<sup>1</sup> and Moriggia.<sup>2</sup> Still

<sup>1</sup> "Im allgemeinen gehört die Heilung dieser Art Leiden zu den schwierigsten Aufgaben der praktischen Medicin."—*Deutsche Klinik*; 1857, S. 179.

<sup>2</sup> "Il male è così ribelle e grave, che l'arte deve ajutarsi nella cura di



many of these persons recover. The patient mentioned farther on as taking four hundred minims of tincture of steel a day, who was forty years old and had suffered for many years, got quite well.

5. In some depraved persons, who cannot be reclaimed from their habits of self-indulgence, or in whom structural change has been set up in the genito-urinary organs, the prognosis is more serious.

6. Contrary to what might be supposed, I have seen no reason to believe that the presence of previous venereal infection, or even of stricture, materially influences the chances of cure; although an attack of syphilis or gonorrhœa, when the patient is under treatment, almost invariably brings on a relapse.

I have been surprised to see how some bad cases of spermatorrhœa get well. I know men, now married and fathers, whom I have attended for emissions occurring as often as five times in a week for three or four weeks together, and accompanied by very considerable impotence. As the organs seem to have naturally little power of reverting to healthy action, I can only conclude that this happy termination arose from the vigorous manner in which they carried out the discipline imposed upon them. But such vigour is only too seldom seen; the natural indolence of many men in these matters will always lead them to put off the evil day till it is too late, and then to blame the gods for the results of their own negligence.

M. Lallemand, with all his genius and love of truth, has, as I have said, materially assisted in disseminating exaggerated views as to the influence of spermatorrhœa upon the health. In the case of a man who died of stricture, complicated with cystitis, and abscesses which completely riddled the prostate gland, he attributed death, not to these causes, but to the "profound alteration in the spermatic organs;" this "profound alteration" consisting in an abscess of the left testicle, the corresponding ejaculatory duct and seminal vesicle being full of pus. Now, such an experienced pathologist must have known that both testicles may be utterly destroyed by disease, or cut off, without the least permanent

tutti i mezzi che le può fornire la morale, l'igiene, la terapia specialmente restoratrice."—*Giornale della R. Acad. di Medicina di Torino*; 1861.

injury to health. Another patient had suffered from serious derangement of the nervous system and digestion long before a cerebral affection also set in; yet these were not enough, and the "growing influence of the seminal discharges on the whole animal economy" is called upon for help.

The late Mr. Acton seemed to have no misgivings at all about curing the complaint. There were no "ifs" in his doctrine. The prognosis was as unerringly favourable as the treatment was easy, and he appeared to meet with no refractory cases. "At a later stage," he says,<sup>1</sup> "when the disease has recurred so often as to impair the general health, or when the patient is naturally delicate, nutritious food, tonics, and sea air *cure the complaint.*" And again, speaking of the serious cases,<sup>2</sup> "These patients *get well* under the repeated passage of instruments . . . particularly when combined with astringent injections;" an opinion so flatly at variance with what I have seen, that it appears to me useless attempting to reconcile the discrepancy. My experience is, that "when the disease has recurred so often as to impair the general health," it is apt to give the surgeon a great deal of trouble, and, that the remedies just mentioned frequently fail to cure it, I have ample means of knowing.

Dr. Druitt's prognosis is equally favourable. He says,<sup>3</sup> spermatorrhœa is readily brought within limits by treatment, and that he has cured many an inveterate case of imagined spermatorrhœa (under which head, as I understand him, he comprehends frequent emissions) and impotence by a few grain-doses of calomel, followed by combinations of quinine with Epsom salts, and afterwards by steel or zinc.

This is one of the many things in medicine which I cannot comprehend. I have repeatedly tried Dr. Druitt's treatment and entirely failed to notice such results. I do not see any superiority in it over that which I have suggested. Had I not considered that I was justified by ample experience in ranking higher the system laid down in this work, I should have thought myself imperatively bound to recommend Dr. Druitt's in preference.

<sup>1</sup> *Diseases of the Urinary and Generative Organs*; 1851, p. 251.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. citat.*, p. 254.

*The Surgeon's Vade Mecum.* By R. Druitt; 1870, p. 629.

My judgment as to the prognosis does not lead me to confirm this gentleman's views. That judgment is that a large number of cases of great severity and obstinacy are met with by those who see much of this complaint; and I must observe that in forming this conclusion I have relied solely on cases which I have had under my own care through their whole course, entirely discarding those which I had no opportunity of tracing subsequently. Mr. Erichsen, I am glad to see, quite recognizes the stubborn nature of the affection. "Under any form of treatment," he says,<sup>1</sup> "the case will be slow, and long-continued perseverance in the use of remedies, local and constitutional, is imperatively necessary." To this accomplished surgeon, then, belongs the credit of having been the first who, from a professor's chair in England, has boldly dared to assail the prevalent method of noticing this affection, and to proclaim that its treatment is not such a short and simple matter as some teachers would have their hearers believe; a view of the case still more emphatically expressed by Herr Winternitz,<sup>2</sup> an author who has carefully studied the affection.

Occasionally a patient is surprised and alarmed at finding that all the signs of an emission, less only the pleasurable sensation caused by the expulsion of the semen, take place during sleep. I have known a man hurry to his surgeon in the greatest anxiety to know what this new state of matters portended. At one time I fancied it must be due to retention of the semen by spasmodic stricture of the urethra; but having found this canal perfectly free from obstruction in some of the cases I examined, and having satisfied myself that there was no subsequent passage of semen with the urine, I felt convinced there must be some other cause for the absence of sensation, and therefore watched the occurrence very carefully. After considerable observation I came to the conclusion, that in these cases there is really an incomplete effort of the system at an emission, but that the testicles, and possibly the seminal vesicles, having to some extent recovered from the weak and irritated state in which they had been, no longer responded so readily as before to the stimulus. I am

<sup>1</sup> *The Science and Art of Surgery.* By John Eric Erichsen; 1872, vol. ii, p. 788.

<sup>2</sup> *Berliner klinische Wochenschrift*; 1877, S. 401.



therefore quite of opinion that this occurrence is a sign of improvement, and the patients themselves testify to the fact that it is not followed by the same exhaustion as an ordinary emission. That under other circumstances an incomplete emission may occur is, I submit, shown by the fact that an ejaculation of semen, or what the patient supposes to be such, may take place after the removal of the testicles, as in the case quoted by Mr. Curling<sup>1</sup> from Sir Astley Cooper, where the emission ensued four days after the testicle had been taken away; as also in the case mentioned by Mr. James Wilson<sup>2</sup> of a man who had both testicles removed, and where connexion afterwards was "attended with the usual paroxysm and emission of some fluid."

*Complications of Spermatorrhœa.*—It now remains to examine a few symptoms for which surgeons are consulted by patients who suppose they are labouring under spermatorrhœa, and which also not unfrequently complicate this complaint itself. It may save trouble to say that they are for the most part, when not due to spermatorrhœa or masturbation, to be traced back to some venereal cause, such as excess in connexion and obstinate or neglected gonorrhœa. I propose to group them all together, thinking such a plan more practical and useful in a small work like this than any attempt to arrange them scientifically, and to begin with what seems to me the most important of them.

1. *Vesicular Gleet.*—Vesicular gleet, often described as a passing of semen, and ranked by M. Lallemand as one form of diurnal pollution, is a discharge at stool of glairy, tenacious mucus, supposed to be the contents of the seminal vesicles, and occasionally of mucus from the prostate. It is not always due to masturbation, venereal excesses, or venereal diseases, though any one of the three may bring it on. The complaint, however, demands as much attention as if it were what it is supposed to be, especially as the patient's sufferings at times are anything but imaginary; for though a mere mechanical effect of constipation and an irritable state of the vesicles—though it rarely produces any debilitating effects when not anxiously noticed by

<sup>1</sup> *Op. citat.*, p. 418.

<sup>2</sup> *Lectures on the Structure and Physiology of the Male Urinary and Genital Organs.* By James Wilson, F.R.S.; 1821, p. 132.

the patient, yet no sooner do some persons see it than they jump at the conclusion that they are losing semen, *and nothing can persuade them to the contrary*. A man finding that there is written authority for this view is soon in a position to make himself truly miserable. In vain does the surgeon tell him that the disorder is a simple harmless affair; he may spare himself the trouble of giving any explanation of the matter.

A gentleman, eight-and-twenty years of age, whose constitution had been shattered by a residence in India, and who was under my care for this affection, gave me an account of his sufferings, which I was inclined to think exaggerated till he called on me one morning in a state of depression which quite justified all he said. He looked ill and prostrated to the last degree; his pulse was small, rapid, and thready. The night before he had had a discharge of this kind, followed by a slow oozing of grumous-looking fluid, almost like coffee-grounds, which continued several hours; some of the stains were visible enough on his linen. As I had carefully diagnosed the case, and had found nothing the matter with the bladder, urethra, prostate, or testicles, while there was very distinct evidence of vesicular gleet, I thought it most likely that his discharge came from the vesicles. In another case, where the patient, a healthy man, of very active habits, was rather prone to underrate the severity of his symptoms than to dwell upon them, his brother, a surgeon, told me that he had often seen him coming from the water-closet as pale as a ghost after one of these discharges. I suppose the sensation of passing this mucus had the same effect upon him that the sight of blood has upon some persons. In another person, a farmer, there was the same physical depression. Mental depression is not an uncommon result. I have had under my care more than one medical man suffering from this disorder, who, though quite aware it was harmless, could not throw off the disagreeable impression it produced.

As some authors evidently consider it proved that the function of these organs is to perfect and store up the semen, it will be proper to examine this part of the question before going farther. Many years ago Dr. John Davy made a series of observations on the contents and functions of the seminal vesicles,<sup>1</sup> and came to a

<sup>1</sup> *Edin. Med. and Surg. Journal*; 1838, vol. 1, p. 1.

different conclusion from Hunter, who contested the old doctrine that they are receptacles for the semen. He found the animalcules in the seminal vesicles after death, not always, it is true, but still frequently; sometimes, too, there were only fragments of them, and in others merely a few spermatozoa. He infers that the vesicles are not only recipients for the semen, but secreting organs also. This inference, he thinks, is supported by "the general resemblance in several cases of the fluid in the *vasa deferentia* and of the *vesicles*;" and yet in the very next paragraph (p. 12) he tells us that the fact of the vesicles being secreting organs is supported "by there being a certain difference in almost every case between the fluid of the *vesicles* and that of the *vasa deferentia*."

I must leave the supporters of Dr. Davy's opinion to explain this discrepancy; it goes beyond my powers to do so. One might imagine, from the way in which he speaks, that he had entirely overthrown Hunter's view, a view endorsed, I may remark, by so experienced a pathologist as Professor Henry Lee,<sup>1</sup> and had replaced the physiology of these parts on its ancient basis. But I do not see that he has established anything, and his descriptions are wanting in that completeness which would enable others to erect anything stable on them. He evidently wishes to show that the fluid in the *vasa deferentia* and that in the vesicles are identical; yet in many instances he does not specify what was found in the former with accuracy enough to give us a chance of forming an opinion. He controverts Hunter's statement that the fluid in the vesicles is brownish, though he often found it so himself.<sup>2</sup> This, however, he seems, so far as I understand him, to consider an after-death change in unhealthy persons, and to think that we should find a different state of health in criminals who had been executed; but he fails to tell us why this unhealthy change does not also take place in the identical fluid in the *vasa deferentia*. He appeals triumphantly to Meckel as having answered<sup>3</sup> Hunter's arguments; but I think, if the reader will take the trouble to go through the part of the work quoted from, he will find that Meckel

<sup>1</sup> *St. George's Hospital Reports*; vol. vi, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. citat.*, pp. 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Manuel de l'Anatomie Generale*; 1825. Tom. iii, p. 642.



has simply arrayed against Hunter, and others of his way of thinking, a series of reasons drawn almost entirely from anatomy, human and comparative, of a very inconclusive character, and unsupported by a single physiological or pathological observation of any value.

Dr. Davy solves briefly and clearly the problems as to how the surplus semen is disposed of. In healthy people the vesiculæ are partially emptied each day by the alvine evacuation, but the spermatozoa are always dead; so that he thinks the vesiculæ may serve as cloacæ, and that they are essentially designed for man "to enable him to control and exercise the moral check on the passions, by which he should be distinguished from brute animals." I am afraid Dr. Davy's reasoning is as faulty as his composition, and that is defective enough. Man does not generally "control a check;" and if the vesicles are designed to serve any such purpose in him, it is difficult to understand why we find them, and according to Dr. Davy containing spermatozoa, in the ram and bull, "brute animals" which are generally understood not to put much "moral check" on their passions.

The check too, seems to be of the weakest. Dr. Davy, indeed, found spermatozoa in the fluid; and a surgeon upon whom I could quite depend, and who suffered a great deal from these emissions, told me that he had occasionally found a few dead spermatozoa in the discharge. Other observers have noticed the same thing, but to a very slight extent; and some have examined the fluid without finding any. Comparing this with the bulk of a stain caused by an emission of semen, and calling to mind that strong healthy men often have connexion quite six or eight times a week, in each of which I suppose fifty times as much semen is lost as in the daily passage from the vesicles, the existence of such a controlling power becomes simply incredible.

Supposing Dr. Davy's view, that the spermatozoa are expelled daily in a lifeless state, should prove on inquiry to be right, the animalcules must be killed while in the vesicles—a fact which seems to me fatal to the idea laid down by Messrs. Kirkes and Paget of these bodies being perfected there. These gentlemen say<sup>1</sup> that the semen is stored up in the vesicles in order that the

<sup>1</sup> *Handbook of Physiology*; 1848, p. 611.

development of the spermatozoa may be effected, as they hold that it is not achieved till the semen has lain "*some time*" in the vesicles. *Then the perfecting of the spermatozoa can have little to do with impregnation*, as I believe it has several times happened that a man, in overcoming the resistance to his wishes offered by a female, has had an emission, and yet has, in a second more successful attempt, impregnated her within a few hours after. Again,<sup>1</sup> these gentlemen hold that the semen is probably continuously secreted and passes away with the urine, or is ejected from the urethra in the act of defæcation. But in this case the spermatozoa must be broken up so as to be no longer recognizable, or we should always find them in robust, healthy young men, which is not the case even after straining;<sup>2</sup> and the process must be very rapid to enable the frame to get rid of its almost daily superabundance of semen. And for what purpose is the semen stored up in the vesicles, when we know, by the fact of seminal emission being sometimes tinged with blood in patients labouring under orchitis, that the testicles are also emptied during the act?

The evidence on the other side is overwhelming. Long after the testicles have ceased to secrete, the vesicles continue to fill as usual, and are now and then emptied by the pressure of a hard stool. M. Duplay found<sup>3</sup> the seminal vesicles distended as in the prime of life at quite eighty years of age, although in some instances they were more flattened and relaxed than natural; whereas he continually noticed wasting and loss of weight of the testicles after sixty years of age. I examined the body of a pauper eighty-four years old, who had died in St. Luke's workhouse, then under the charge of Mr. Courtenay, of Finsbury, since dead. The seminal vesicles were as full of fluid as in a young person, but the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* By W. S. Kirkes, M.D.; 1867, p. 693.

<sup>2</sup> "I have examined this fluid passed by several persons, and have never found any spermal elements in it."—Holmes's *System of Surgery*, vol. iv, p. 607. On the other hand Dr. Kirkes says, in his *Handbook of Physiology*, "The fluid-like mucus, also, which is often discharged from the vesiculæ in straining during defæcation, commonly contains seminal filaments."—P. 695. Dr. Griffith also, in a case related by Mr. Acton, found spermatozoa in the fluid passed after straining.

<sup>3</sup> "Recherches sur les Changements et les Alterations que presente, chez les Viellards, l'Appareil secreteur, &c."—*Archives Generales de Medecine*. V<sup>me</sup> Serie; Tom. vi, p. 129, 428.

testicles at this advanced age must have long ceased to produce semen.

Dr. Black opposes this statement.<sup>1</sup> He says it is unwarrantable, because Casper relates the case of a man aged ninety-six who died under the care of a trustworthy observer, Dr. Abel, who had the remarkable opportunity of observing a number of spermatozoa in the vesicles. Farther, to complete the argument, he adduces, also from Casper, the case of a man of sixty-five who had numerous zoosperms in his vesicles; of an invalid aged sixty-eight who was in the same satisfactory condition, and that of a man sixty years old whose secretion also showed zoosperms.

Farther on<sup>2</sup> Dr. Black says, "If more ancient authority can be relied upon, Pliny relates that Massinissa had a son born to him after he was eighty-six years of age; Savonarola asserts that Nicholas de Pelavicinis had a son in his hundredth year; Alexander Benedictus knew a German who had one in his ninetyeth year; and Longinus mentions another, who at the age of a hundred married a woman of thirty, by whom he had a numerous offspring (!) . . . Dr. M——, of P——, has just informed me to-day (Aug. 9th, 1871), that his grand uncle, Captain ——, married at the age of ninety-six, that he lived for ten years afterwards, and had a family of four by his wife. And Old Parr possessed sexual capacity at one hundred and forty!"

Had Dr. Black confined himself to pointing out that I had no proof, in the case quoted, of this particular patient's inability to procreate, he would have had some ground to go upon, for in fact I never examined this part of the question. I took the ordinary rule of life as my standard, and have every reason to believe that it did not deceive me; and that in the great majority of cases the testicles have, at the age of eighty-four, "long ceased to produce semen;" that is to say, to fill regularly with properly-constituted fluid. Like most men, I have heard of instances where persons had procreated at a still later age, and put about as much faith in them as most men do. Dr. Black having imported quite a different element into the question, I proceed to examine it.

As to Casper's first case there is an easy answer. It is always much more probable that an observer deceived himself, or was de-

<sup>1</sup> *Op. citat.*, p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.



ceived, than that a very, very unusual event occurred. When we know how often stories about extraordinary longevity have collapsed; when we read in quite recent times of an autopsy on the body of a centenarian, who turned out to be eighty-four years of age; and of a british officer receiving the congratulations of his friends on his attaining his hundred and fourth year, when it subsequently transpired that there never was any such name on the Army List, we are apt to grow sceptical. The cases at sixty-eight, sixty-five, and sixty have nothing to do with the state of a man at eighty-four; they are altogether irrelevant. With regard to the instances mentioned by Benedictus and others, I grieve at having to throw even a shade of suspicion on the testimony of such respectable ancients, but I confess to an utter disbelief in them; not that they are pure fabrications perhaps, but that there is too much exaggeration and credulity in the whole affair. The story told by Dr. M——, who figures at 1871, among "more ancient authorities," I place in the same category. I want a little more evidence before believing that any man lived to be a hundred and six years old. Finally, I look upon Old Parr as an utter impostor, who traded on the credulity of mankind. When alive on earth he found people of easy faith, and his ghost might find them now.

M. Dieu gives a very different account.<sup>1</sup> He found that the spermatozoa entirely disappear at the age of eighty-six. Nothing can be more express than the terms in which he tells us this.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Curling, an excellent observer, and one who has paid great attention to these subjects, only once saw them as late as eighty-seven.<sup>3</sup> M. Dieu gives the results of 105 autopsies, which form valuable materials for estimating the rapid and steady decay of the secretion as man approaches the epoch of natural impotence. While in 49 persons who had passed the age of seventy he found spermatozoa absent in 27, he found them wanting in 28 out of 38 cases in octogenarians. True, M. Dieu thinks men might fecundate up to the age of eighty-six, but he puts this forward merely as a supposition founded on the occasional presence of

<sup>1</sup> *Recherches sur le Sperme des Vieillards*. Par A. Dieu, Medicin aide-major, à l'Hotel des Invalides. *Journal de l'Anat. et de la Physiol.*; 1867.

<sup>2</sup> P. 452.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. citat.*, p. 402.

spermatozoa in the vesicles after death. The 105 *post-mortem* examinations embraced ages from sixty-four to ninety-seven. He found no spermatozoa in 64 of these, 4 of whom were nonagenarians. Of the remaining 41, 14 showed spermatozoa more or less truncated. There is no mention of absence of the usual fluid in the seminal vesicles, though in some instances it had undergone peculiar changes.

So far as regards the natural secretion of the vesicles, that seems to be unaffected by arrest of the influx of semen from the testicles, for they secrete in persons who have been castrated, and M. Gosselin found the seminal vesicle full when the cauda epididymis of the corresponding side was quite obliterated; and Hunter on several occasions met with the same state when the corresponding testicle had been removed. When one testicle is lost, the corresponding vesicle suffers no atrophy. Now, were their function to receive semen, what we know of the physiology of similar structures would teach us to believe that *they would waste so soon as they were no longer required*, or rather, exercised. There is nothing in their structure to forbid this; on the contrary, they belong to that class of organs most likely to contract upon themselves when not periodically expanded.

Mr. Hunter, speaking of the generally received view (that the secretion thrown off at stool is semen), remarks that it is not of the same colour, and that it attacks those who have just had an emission of semen. A man not given to any excesses may have a discharge of this kind and connexion shortly after. We are told that it has the peculiar smell of semen,<sup>1</sup> but this statement has been controverted on very good authority. Mr. James Wilson, in his lectures delivered before the College of Surgeons, says,<sup>2</sup> "In smell it does not resemble semen;" and Hunter, in examining the fluid in the vesicles of two men, one of whom had been killed by a cannon-ball and the other by a fall, also found that it had not the smell of semen. Both these distinguished surgeons clearly refer to the odour of the seminal fluid when ejaculated; but I believe this is due to the admixture of other secretions, as that of the testicles merely does not seem to possess any.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lallemand; Meckel, &c.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. citat.*, p. 121.

<sup>3</sup> Kölliker, *Handbuch der Gewebelehre des Menschen*; 1852, S. 497.



An expulsion of this mucus produces no ejaculatory sensation when passing along the urethra, as always occurs in those rare instances when a real emission happens at stool. All that the patient is aware of is that a bulky body is traversing the canal.

Dr. Humphry is of opinion<sup>1</sup> that it proceeds apparently from the prostate gland; but it appears to me that the quantity discharged is too large for the gland in its healthy state, and I therefore suspect that the vesicles and Cowper's glands are also implicated.

The theory has been put forward that the seminal vesicles contain semen, and are the principal organs affected in spermatorrhœa, on the ground that seminal emissions occur after castration; but the facts observed prove the very reverse; for in castrated persons, though erotic dreams may appear, with a discharge from the vesicles, Cowper's glands, &c., yet the patients become every month more insensible to their occurrence, while they steadily decline in number from the want of the presiding organ. In those deprived of the testicles in early life there is often a considerable amount of desire, but they never feel the sensation of connexion, any more than a man born blind ever enjoys the sense of sight, though he may desire to see as much as other people. And if emissions of this imperfect kind occur after castration, what does the fact prove? Simply that the subordinate parts continue to act after the essential organ is removed, much as they did while it remained *in situ*.

"The question," says Mr. Curling,<sup>2</sup> "has been raised, and was at one time much discussed in Germany, whether a person castrated after arriving at the age of puberty, may not retain the power of procreating for a certain period afterwards." It appears to me that much discussion on such a point was sheer waste of time, and that one or two observations by a practical specialist would have settled it. There is no authentic evidence, of which I know anything, that can really be held to prove that impregnation ever occurred after ablation. If it could really be supposed that the seminal vesicles contain sufficient fertilizing fluid for one impreg-

<sup>1</sup> Holmes's *System of Surgery*, vol. iv, p. 607.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. citat.*, p. 418.



nation, it is pretty certain that that one emission would effectually and for ever empty the receptacles; and an examination with the microscope of the fluid thrown out by this emission would decide whether it contained sufficient living spermatozoa to admit of its fertilizing the female, which I am disposed to think would not be the case. Future examination would, I think, show a growing or entire absence of spermatozoa, and under such circumstances any evidence about paternity might safely be rejected. Mr. Lee, as I understand him, considers that the mucus escapes in this form of gleet from the circular fibres at the orifices of the vesicles losing their power, so that the cysts cannot resist pressure. "This want of tone may," according to him, "result from over excitement, from weakness, from old age, or actual disease."

As the affection, though really of no great importance, is one which often causes patients a most unnecessary degree of anxiety, it may be as well to say that it is quite curable. I have seen it, after lasting twenty years, disappear entirely under very simple means.

2. *Imperceptible Passage of Semen.*—Excluding cases in which the semen is passed by erection and jactitation (involuntary emission), and those in which it is expelled after straining (vesicular gleet), we have remaining only one form—that of imperceptible expulsion of it into the bladder, from whence it is extruded with the urine—a disorder of which we hear a great deal and see very little, since few, very few, instances have occurred in which this took place to an infinitesimal amount; and I was surprised to hear Mr. De Meric, in the discussion on Mr. Gascoyen's paper previously alluded to, speak of this symptom as a disorder. I do not of course deny that semen thus passed is occasionally met with, and that in persons who have given way to great excesses, we may find a very small quantity of it; but in a shape of sufficient severity to do mischief no human eye has yet seen it, or probably ever will. Mr. Gascoyen has never witnessed<sup>1</sup> such an affection, and very properly doubts its existence. For all these reasons I feel myself quite justified in passing it over very cur-

<sup>1</sup> *On Spermatorrhœa and its Treatment.* By George G. Gascoyen, F.R.C.S., Surgeon to the Lock Hospital, &c. *Brit. Med. Journal*, 1872, vol. i, p. 67.

sorily here, and relegating it to the section on urinary deposits, where the reader will find what I have got to say under the head of "*Spermatozoa in the Urine.*"

3. *Cystitis*.—Though a rare result or accompaniment of spermatorrhœa, yet I have seen a slight degree of cystitis, or perhaps I ought rather to say cystorrhœa, in a few instances occur along with this disorder; and in some persons I have seen a discharge, after making water, of thin yellow mucus, which passed along the urethra, quite different from the mucus of the vesicles. This form of disorder has not been accompanied by any painful symptoms. It is not dangerous either, but it exerts a very depressing influence upon the patient's mind, and is generally found associated with a low state of health. It is not in any way necessarily connected with either gleet or gonorrhœa.

The worst case I ever saw was that of a patient under the care of Mr. McDougall, the translator of M. Lallemand's work. He was in shattered health, and had never been strong. He suffered from a most severe retractile stricture, and appeared to be slowly sinking under the irritation caused by it. His face was blanched, and had a singularly care-worn look. He did not expect to be cured, as Mr. McDougall, in whom he had great confidence, had given a very unfavourable opinion of his case. This patient two or three times, when consulting me, withdrew to the water-closet, taking with him a cup of gutta-percha tissue for the penis, and brought it back with quite half a wineglass of thin yellow mucus in it, passed after emptying the bladder. This may have been fluid from the seminal vesicles, which has been seen of a similar tint, but so far as I know only in one instance, that mentioned by M. Dieu.<sup>1</sup> It seemed to be a simple homogeneous fluid. I have met with many cases since, some very severe, but none which could be fairly said to approach this. Such an amount of discharge, however, as will aid in establishing the diagnosis is not uncommon.

4. *Affections of the Prostate Gland* constitute another of the imaginary evils with which many of these patients torment themselves. There can be no doubt that they are anything but imaginary in many persons who have passed the meridian of life;

<sup>1</sup> *Op. citat.*, p. 460.

## 48 *Affections of the Prostate ; Urethral Gleet.*

but as a sequel of spermatorrhœa in young people they must be extremely rare, as in many hundreds, I may say thousands, of cases, I have only very seldom seen this complication. Sometimes, indeed, the prostate secretes a little more mucus than usual, in which the microscope may detect a few fragments of débris of tissue ; but anything like the symptoms of acute prostatitis which sometimes follow gonorrhœa in the young, or the enlargement of the gland which we meet with in the old, I have certainly not seen as a result of either emissions or masturbation.

Patients who find that they cannot expel their stools without straining are often alarmed by noticing that this act is followed by a slow draining of mucus from the urethra, and then arrive at the conviction that they are suffering from spermatorrhœa, or some affection of the prostate ; but this symptom has no such importance ; it is probably only the relic of a very slight attack of cystorrhœa of the neck of the bladder, or the mucous membrane overlying the prostate, brought on by gonorrhœa or cold, sometimes possibly by excessive masturbation, and generally yields easily to suitable treatment.

5. *Urethral Mucous Gleet.*—Another of those affections which occasion some nervous patients extreme anxiety is a discharge of mucus after erections. Delicate, sensitive men, remembering the follies of boyhood, set it down at once as spermatorrhœa ; and the surgeon must either treat it in earnest or lose his patient. When I have told the patient that he really only noticed it because he was always worrying himself about this malady ; that he had all his life, and always would have, a secretion of mucus after powerful erections, and that such a discharge was common to every son of Adam, *though, perhaps, more abundant in relaxed than in high health*, I have generally found him incredulous ; some one had told him, or he had read in some book, that semen was discharged in this way and this was quite enough. I soon saw argument was useless, and now always apply myself to the cure of the principal affection without disputing the point, and, happily, as the patient improves in health, he usually takes a less morbid view of such petty matters.

As, however, mild injections never do any harm in these cases, and are often serviceable in relieving the weak and irritable state



of the urethra, besides quieting the mind of the patient, I see no objection to their use ; and in the section on treatment the reader will find, what I hope are, sufficiently full directions for the employment of this remedy.

In other cases, discharges of this kind occur at night, and are described by the patient as real seminal emissions. The principal symptom is a number of small, dirty, pale stains on the linen, without any erotic dreams. I have seen cases in which copaiba had been given, under the supposition that these patients were suffering from gleet.

In some rare cases there is a copious discharge of mucus mixed with a certain amount of pus, which looks very much like the discharge in gleet after gonorrhœa, only that it is present in greater quantity, more like the amount thrown off by women in the declining stage of leucorrhœa. It appears to come from the whole of the urethra in some persons, as I have found this canal tender all the way along. In one instance I saw it accompanied by balanitis of the same kind. The patient had two or three attacks while under my care, and had had several previously. He knew when one was coming on, and having observed the premonitory symptoms, promised to call and show me the discharge in full bloom, and kept his word. There was not the slightest reason to suspect any venereal affection in this case ; and, strange to say, though the inflammation of the urethra and prepuce was so extensive and evident, the emissions were not severe. This strange form of discharge yielded easily to injections of nitrate of silver. I have had two more cases since the above was written. In one the irritation seemed principally due to a very long prepuce, the opening of which was extremely narrow. The patient assured me that he had never attempted connexion.

6. *Irritable Urethra.*—Of this there are two kinds widely distinct from each other. One is marked by extreme sensitiveness of the canal. On passing a bougie, even with the greatest gentleness, the patient shrinks and complains almost as much as if he were having this done while suffering from acute gonorrhœa. This state is often accompanied by weeping of mucus, in which inflammation corpuscles are found. On opening the lips of the

urethra the surface is seen pink or red, and bedewed with moisture much as though a gonorrhoea were beginning. This symptom may be a result of masturbation, but I have seen it in patients who assured me that they had given up the practice for years. It seems to me a purely inflammatory affection, rarely running on however to the formation of pus. The second form appears to be of nervous origin. The urethra looks perfectly healthy, and when a bougie is passed there may be no unusual sensitiveness, but the patient is tormented by a sensation as if a worm were creeping along the canal. Again, he feels as if a little fluid were oozing from the urethra, but on looking he sees nothing of the kind ; or there may be a sense of tickling, itching, or crawling. Some patients complain of excessive sensitiveness in the urethra, near the glans ; others cannot define or realize the uneasiness, though they suffer quite as severely. Patients often speak of these symptoms as far worse to bear than any pain. I am disposed to class along with them the perspiration of the scrotum, the coldness of the penis and scrotum, and an annoying pain in the epididymis complained of by some persons. They all look very like nervous symptoms dependent on disordered health.

7. *Stricture.* 8. *Irritable State of Foreskin.* 9. *Coldness of Penis and Scrotum.* 10. *Varicocele.*—These complications are grouped together here, not on account of any affinity in function, structure, or disorder, but because what I have to say about them is so strictly limited to their treatment, that it seemed better to refer them to that section. No doubt in a systematic work it would have been quite right to take them here ; but as this is not a systematic work, it would be worse than waste of time to do so. It may be as well to state, that there are also some complications spoken of in the chapter on treatment which do not figure here at all.

*Urinary Deposits.*—Perhaps after the idea that semen is imperceptibly draining away from his system, the most fertile source of misery for an anxious, desponding patient of this class, is the conviction that he has got something the matter with his urine. Most men are sensible enough to rest satisfied with the assurance that there is no state of this fluid peculiar to spermatorrhoea, that there is not the least necessity for the surgeon to be continually

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examining specimens, and that all the forms of deposit, which they are most likely to be suffering from, will pass away as the health improves. But there are some few persons who, unfortunately for themselves, are more easily silenced than convinced by the answers given to their questions. A patient of this kind not unfrequently acquires a morbid habit of watching every change in his urine, and treasuring up every scrap of mucus or epithelium he may see in it for inspection under the microscope. It is useless to tell such a person that there is nothing the matter with him. The conclusion he arrives at, is, not that there is an honest desire to save him needless expense and misery, but that his medical attendant is afraid to tell him the whole truth; and when he has received the same account of his case from a second or a third, he falls back upon the impregnable position, that the precious material is escaping in quantities too small for the microscope to detect, and that his health is being ruined by an invisible process of deterioration.

As, however, the state of the urine will sometimes require a certain amount of special attention, I proceed to offer a few practical remarks on the diagnosis and importance of certain urinary deposits.

*Diagnosis of Urinary Deposits.*—In severe cases of emissions, attended with exhaustion, dyspepsia, rheumatism, cystitis, or stricture, or any combination of these, the surgeon will find *the deposits most usually met with when such complications are present without spermatorrhœa, and he will meet with no others*, unless it be now and then a few stray spermatozoa. I do not in any way gainsay the observations of other writers when I state, that my own are distinctly adverse to the existence of any pathognomonic sign of spermatorrhœal urine. Still every person who investigates this fluid will frequently meet with urates, uric acid, phosphates, oxalate of lime, epithelium, mucus and pus.

I at once admit that the observations, on which the above-given conclusions are founded, were limited to a search for the most usual constituents of disturbed urine; indeed, I need scarcely say, that no person busily engaged in practice could submit the urine of many patients to anything deserving the name of analysis, considering that a proper examination of a single



specimen demands that at least thirty processes should be gone through. Consequently I wish to be understood as saying, not that no other disturbing elements were ever present, but that the deposits spoken of were those usually met with, and that only simple means were employed to detect them. At one period I spent, or rather, I may say, wasted a great deal of time and money in more elaborate observations, but as I found nothing that repaid the search, or that served in any way to throw light on the pathology of the disorder or its complications, I gradually abandoned the experiment. For the convenience of the reader I give a brief summary, embracing the most marked characteristics of the deposits and the tests commonly employed.

*Phosphates.*—Deposit white, sometimes ropy. Insoluble by heat and in solution of ammonia or liquor potassæ. Soluble in acetic acid and dilute hydrochloric acid. Wholly or partially dissolved by nitric acid. Urine generally nearly or quite neutral, or even alkaline, but may be acid. Of high specific gravity, varying in colour from pale to deep brown; not unfrequently contains also mucus and according to some authorities, sometimes blood; latter constituent not seen by myself in spermatorrhœa cases; often covered with an iridescent pellicle. White amorphous deposit, not acted on by liquor potassæ, indicates phosphate of lime. When the deposit is visibly crystalline, it is either neutral triple phosphate, or bibasic triple (alkaline) phosphate. In the former the crystals are prismatic or penniform; in the latter, radiated or foliaceous. Frequently preceded by great wear and tear of the system, injuries, &c. Accompanied, especially when the phosphate of lime is absent and the urine is of a deep amber hue, by dyspepsia, restlessness, irritability, mal-assimilation, and great loss of strength.

*Carbonate of Lime.*—Occurs with phosphatic deposits. Deposit visibly crystalline. Crystals radiated, foliaceous, or dumb-bell shaped. Insoluble in ammonia. Soluble in acetic acid, with effervescence.

*Oxalate of Lime.*—Deposit white; visibly crystalline. Insoluble by heat and in potass, ammonia, and acetic acid. Dissolves without effervescence on addition of nitric acid. Crystals octahedral. When dumb-bell shaped, with the same characters, oxalurate of

lime is present. Urine often darker than in health, sometimes contains excess of urea or epithelial cells; generally of high specific gravity, as from 1·025 to 1·030. Often accompanied by great depression, physical and mental, wasting, nervousness, loss of energy, dry state of skin, and dark unhealthy complexion. A tendency to boils and carbuncles, as also to scaly eruptions, is said<sup>1</sup> to accompany it, but I have not been able to confirm this. Irritability of the bladder and great tenderness of the urethra are not unfrequent concomitants. May follow application of cold over lower part of spine, mechanical violence to the region of the kidneys, the hasty or unskilful passing of a bougie or catheter, and great excitement of the genital organs. The influence of the two latter is very questionable.

*Urates.*—Urine acid, generally of low specific gravity, 1·012 to 1·018, but may be 1·020. Deposit pale, amorphous, but may be also marl-coloured, pink, or reddish. In latter case, if slowly soluble by heat, purpurine is present with the urates. Deposit disappears under action of heat, or on addition of liquor potassæ or liquor ammoniæ. When visibly crystalline and the crystals dumb-bell shaped or spherical, with or without spicules, urate of soda is present. Frequently appears after checked transpiration, catarrh, &c.; often more copious after eating freely of animal food. Urate of soda common in gout and rheumatism.

*Uric Acid.*—Deposit yellow, pink or red; visibly crystalline. Crystals dumb-bell shaped with fringed edges, lozenge-shaped, square, hour-glass form, or some compound or modification of these. Deposit dissolves when heated with liquor potassæ. Often found where there is a good deal of emaciation, or exhaustion from fatigue, mental or bodily, or both; acute inflammatory disorders; gout; rheumatism, and sometimes functional disorders of heart, liver, and spleen; pyrosis; deficient perspiration, &c. Deficient in anæmia.

*Cystine.*—Deposit white; always crystalline, never amorphous. Insoluble by heat; soluble in ammonia. Crystals, hexagonal plates. Urine has an odour of sweetbriar; when kept, becomes covered with a pellicle composed of crystals of cystine and

<sup>1</sup> *Watson's Principles and Practice of Physic.* Vol. ii, p. 638.

ammonio-phosphate of magnesia. Specific gravity usually low. Generally connected with disordered nutrition.

*Pus.*—Urine coagulable by heat; generally acid or neutral. Deposit settles down like a creamy mass. In some cases I could only compare it to exceedingly fine particles of semola, or some such material, diffused through a pale coffee-coloured fluid. Contains spherical globules not imbedded in a matrix, about an eighteen-hundredth of an inch in diameter, studded with molecules or granules, and showing, when acetic acid is added, a double or triple nucleus. Shaken with liquor potassæ, becomes dense and translucent. Agitated with ether, and the solution gently evaporated, yellow butter-like globules are left.

*Mucus.*—In normal quantity and condition, urine slightly flocculent. Deposit easily acted upon by nitric acid, mixes with the urine when shaken. In abnormal quantity and condition, as from severe affection of the bladder or spinal cord, urine may beropy with alkaline reaction. Deposit coagulable by acetic acid, consists of tenacious matrix with cells, some small and round, others large and flat, with oval nuclei.

In addition to these, the urine may contain striated, earthy, flattened corpuscles, possibly from the prostate gland; epithelial cells, casts of uriniferous tubes, and particles of débris apparently thrown off from the posterior part of the urethra and neck of the bladder. These last are not very unfrequently found in spermatorrhœa, especially when it is very severe, and when it has been preceded by gonorrhœa. They may be wholly or in part derived from the prostate. The specific gravity of the urine in these patients is, with the exception of those persons liable to a very free discharge of it whenever the mind is a good deal occupied, about the average, or perhaps a little higher, from 1·020 to 1·021. I have rarely found bile in it, and scarcely ever blood.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following very simple test for blood in urine is given by Prof. Almen:—A few cubic centimètres of tincture of guaiacum are mixed with an equal volume of oil of turpentine, in a test tube, and shaken until an emulsion is formed. The urine to be tested is then carefully added, so that it may sink to the bottom. When the emulsion and urine come into contact the guaiacum resin separates, and falls as a fine white, dirty yellow, or green precipitate. If blood is present in the urine, the resin will have a more or less intense blue colour, often almost indigo. In normal urine, or that containing albumen



*Spermatozoa in the Urine.*—Professor Bennett, of Edinburgh, one of the most enthusiastic and earliest advocates of the microscope, used to relate a case in which, finding spermatozoa in the urine, he recommended the use of chalybeate instead of purgative mineral waters. This he brought forward as an illustration of the value of his favourite instrument in facilitating diagnosis. With all possible deference to Professor Bennett, I would venture to give this as an instance of the facility with which men are led away from the path of clinical study by so-called scientific methods of investigation. A patient voiding spermatozoa would certainly be in such a state of prostration as to call for tonics, without any examination of the urine; and the absence of the diagnostic sign in the next ten cases of spermatorrhœa, which would in all probability have occurred, could only have tended to confuse the judgment of those who were taught to rely on it. Dr. Lionel Beale tells us,<sup>1</sup> that the occasional presence of spermatozoa in urine must not be looked upon, in itself, as evidence of that condition to which the name of spermatorrhœa has been applied.

Dr. Golding Bird, a most careful observer, a man who enjoyed excellent opportunities for investigation, which he made use of to the utmost, and who had a large consulting practice in urinary disorders, speaks very guardedly. He says<sup>2</sup> “spermatozoa are by no means *very* unfrequent in urinary deposits, a *few* being *occasionally* found on examining microscopically the inferior portions of the urine of the male adult;” a way of putting the question rather calculated to excite doubt as to whether he had made up his mind about it. He also points out<sup>3</sup> the serious error M. Lallemand has fallen into of mistaking alkaline for spermatic urine; describing it as opaque and thick, as if mixed with gruel, with a foetid and nauseous odour; characteristics which, as Dr. Bird justly says, are sufficiently common in ammoniacal urine, but certainly by no means so in that containing spermatozoa. Dr. Carpenter says,<sup>4</sup> “In cases of nocturnal emission, the spermatozoa may *not unfrequently* be found actively moving through

or pus, this blue colour does not appear, and thus proves the absence of blood.

<sup>1</sup> *Brit. Med. Journal*; 1860, p. 871.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. citat.*, p. 374.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 375.

<sup>4</sup> *Principles of Human Physiology*, p. 823.

the urine in the morning."<sup>1</sup> The late Mr. Quekett, who was one of the most truthful and painstaking men living, told me that he had repeatedly examined the urine in very bad cases of spermatorrhœa, and that he had rarely met with spermatozoa, and these invariably in small numbers. I have been singularly unfortunate, for though I employed, as I thought, every precaution, I have often examined several specimens of urine without finding any of these bodies. Dr. William Frazer's experience coincides with mine. He considers the appearance of spermatozoa in the urine extremely rare, and believes they are never seen except some spermatic fluid is lying in the urethra and is washed out by the urine. Dr. Lionel Beale seems<sup>2</sup> to think they occur pretty frequently, and are even met with in the urine of persons not labouring under spermatorrhœa, and Dr. Dicenta seems to have been unusually successful. He detected semen in urine in 19 cases, and after a hard stool in 23, out of 203 patients. But, indeed, his cases seem to have been much more severe than I have usually seen them. He found blood in the emissions in 2 per cent. of them, or rather in 3 cases out of 153; and out of 140 cases, 6 in which the emissions occurred every night; whereas I have only seen this twice in a very much larger number of patients.

Spermatozoa may appear in the urine owing to constipation, when straining at stool may force a few into the urethra, or they may enter this fluid after connexion or masturbation, but under any circumstances they are found in far too small numbers to qualify them for the rank of a pathological indication. Generally, at the utmost some dozen or fifteen can be observed in the field of the microscope, and even these few only got with difficulty from the lowest stratum of urine after it has stood for several hours; whereas when a drop of real semen, mixed with water, is examined the field is seen swarming with them. Mr. McDougall says that an eighth-inch object-glass should be employed for the detection of the spermatozoa, and that a Powell's microscope is

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Teevan, at a meeting of the Harveian Society, mentioned two cases in which he had detected spermatozoa in the urine.—*British Medical Journal*; 1868, vol. ii, p. 232.

<sup>2</sup> *British Medical Journal*: 1860, p. 737.

better than one by Ross for this purpose. Dr. Lionel Beale, however, remarks,<sup>1</sup> I think rightly, that a practised eye will easily detect them with a quarter-inch objective.

Dr. Golding Bird says<sup>2</sup> that along with spermatozoa, round granular bodies, rather larger than the body of a spermatozoon are found, and that they appear to be identical with the seminal granules of Wagner. I confess myself quite unable to throw any light upon their nature. I have seen bodies, which appeared to me very similar, in the crusts of eczema when boiled in a strong solution of caustic soda. The same author tells us that large crystals of oxalate of lime often occur in spermatic urine, and that his attention was first called to the connexion between the two by Professor Wolff, of Berlin. M. Donné considered the relation of the one to the other so constant, that the presence of the oxalate might be looked upon as a certain indication of the existence of spermatorrhœa. Dr. Bird rightly combats this idea, and my own experience quite confirms his view, as I have repeatedly observed distinct crystals of the oxalate in men who were not only free from spermatorrhœa, but according to their own statements, had never in their lives suffered from it.

*State of the Semen in Disease.*—Although not in any manner ranking strictly among the complications of spermatorrhœa, this subject possesses a certain amount of interest; and accordingly a few words on it may not be out of place. M. Liégeois, who has paid great attention to this matter, has arrived at the following conclusion:—

1. That all men in good health, whether adolescent, adult, or aged, having neither anomalies, vices of conformation, nor any traces of former affections of the organs of generation, have in their semen spermatozoa, the material elements of fecundation.

2. That acute, chronic, or constitutional diseases unconnected with the genital organs do not seem to exert any influence on the spermatic secretion in the adult by giving rise to azoospermia. In aged persons, on the other hand, this is a frequent consequence.

3. That double gonorrhœal orchitis almost always arrests the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Op. citat.*, p. 376.



secretion of spermatozoa, thus bringing on sterility; single, it diminishes this secretion. If the orchitis do not come on from gonorrhœa it is not so injurious. Affections of the body of the testis, such as syphilitic orchitis, act very injuriously in inducing sterility. Inflammations in the neighbourhood of the testicle and epididymis do not.

4. That spermatorrhœa, as a rule, does not modify the sper-matic secretion.

It seems however pretty well established that even after double orchitis, there is, provided no permanent occlusion or destruction of the tubes has taken place, a gradual return of the presence of the spermatozoa in the seminal secretion. The period of this return seems to be about eight or nine months.

M. Liégeois is right in saying that spermatorrhœa (that is to say, emissions) does not as a rule modify the semen; but in an advanced state of the disease, especially in the case of men who have been guilty of great venereal excesses, this does not hold good, as the fluid sometimes becomes thin, while the spermatozoa are dead, truncated, broken up, or even altogether absent.

### CHAPTER III.

#### PATHOLOGY OF IMPOTENCE.

OF all the results of long-neglected seminal emissions the most to be dreaded is impotence, either temporary, imaginary, or permanent. When the latter form is thoroughly established, the condition of the patient, if young, or even middle-aged, is far from enviable. He thinks himself blotted out, as it were, from the book of existence; and though each passing year may reconcile him more and more to his fate, yet the intervening period is only too often one of utter wretchedness. Looking therefore to the great importance of the affection, I thought it best to discuss it, though both a result and a complication of spermatorrhœa, in a separate chapter.

The varieties of impotence which we meet here are due to three causes: 1 Premature emission; 2 Defective power of erection; and 3 Imagination acting on an excitable state of the system. It is not very easy to assign to each factor in the affection the precise share of influence it really exerts, and therefore I think it will be best to take the three together, and deal separately with those cases where the patient is suffering from a steady decline in the virile power.

The forms of incapacity to fecundate, known as azoospermia and aspermatism, scarcely come within the scope of a work which professes to treat of impotence principally as a result or complication of spermatorrhœa; however, as the specialist in this branch is sometimes consulted for these affections, it may not be out of place to say a few words about them. The absence of spermatozoa in the fluid emitted during connexion has often been noticed, and indeed is not very uncommon after double orchitis, particularly when treated with antiphlogistics; naturally enough too, it is an inevitable result of certain destructive changes in the structure of the testicles which I need not particularize, and of occlusion of the epididymis, vas deferens, and ejaculatory duct

on both sides, several instances of which have been recorded. Irrespective of this, Ultzmann describes<sup>1</sup> three states of the semen accompanied by absence of spermatozoa. 1. A catarrhal and purulent condition, throwing down a considerable amount of white sediment, in which is found a great deal of epithelium and pus corpuscles, with scattered blood globules ; a state due to inflammation of the vesicles. 2. A condition marked by abnormal development of the sperm crystals, rudimentary in normal semen, and presence of cylindrical epithelium and molecular detritus ; according to the same author<sup>2</sup> these crystals consist of phosphate of magnesia. 3. Colloid semen, which contains no spermatozoa or sperm crystals, but presents a quantity of colloid, degenerated epithelium, and corpuscles heaped together (*geschichtete*). As I understand Bergh he considers<sup>3</sup> that absence of spermatozoa may be due, in addition to co-arctation of the canals, to a natural defect in the secretory power of the tubuli themselves ; like aspermatism, this is compatible with normal position and seemingly normal state of the testes.

In aspermatism no semen is ejaculated. Of course this is the case in some forms of azoospermia depending on occlusion, but Bergh also describes an idiopathic or nervous form, and I am satisfied he is right. In some persons, even with a perfectly vigorous erection, no fluid whatever, not even urethral mucus, is at times emitted on connexion. One patient assured me that this had happened to him three times in a single night, yet at all other times the act with him was quite normal. Mostly it is only the semen which is not expelled, a state sometimes induced by intoxication and bringing on protracted priapism ; it may, however, occur quite irrespective of this, and terminate in what has been not inaptly called seminal colic, though perhaps spasmodic stricture would define it as well, for it seems clear that the process is one of spasm affecting, at different parts, the various efferent ducts. Besides the case just given, may be cited the evidence of Ultzmann, who noticed<sup>4</sup> aspermatism in conjunction with healthy state of the testicles and patulous condition of the canals.

<sup>1</sup> *Virchow and Hirsch's Jahresbericht* ; 1878, B. 2, S. 256.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* ; 1876, B. 2, S. 259.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* ; 1878, B. 2, S. 256.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* *Loc. citat.*



But to return to the varieties selected for discussion. Instances of premature emission are perhaps the most common, and may be due to nervousness and disuse of function; but we rarely see this symptom alone—usually it is accompanied with some impairment, temporary or permanent, of the virile power. This state may or may not be aggravated by the fears of the patient; certainly it is met with, even in an aggravated form, among persons not at all of an imaginative or excitable frame of mind. When we find all the three conditions of mischief united in the same person, we have before us quite enough to make such a man extremely uneasy, or rather, to speak plainly, downright miserable; and this is the state the surgeon is often expected to prescribe for.

A young gentleman calls upon a surgeon, and tells him he has committed masturbation in his youth, but gave it up so soon as he was aware of what he was doing. He is now impotent. He has attempted connexion and failed. The erection was weak, and the emission took place too quickly. Possibly he is married, or, more perplexing still, on the very brink of marriage, and driven half frantic at the prospect of not being able to consummate marriage. He has never had any venereal disease, or at the utmost a slight gonorrhoea. He never carried self-abuse to any excess, or suffered much from emissions till lately, but he has heard enough, and read enough in some infernal quack book, to frighten him. Does the surgeon hold out any hopes to him of a cure? Does he not think the case a very bad, or rather a hopeless one? Now, here a few kind words, a little judicious advice, may save this patient a world of misery. If proper treatment be adopted, and continence enforced until the desire for it has become irrepressible, the best results may confidently be looked for. Should the surgeon merely ridicule the patient's fears, and tell him there is nothing the matter, he will only add to the mischief.

Again, a continent young man, say from twenty to thirty years old, has suffered a good deal from emissions. He is not alarmed so much about them as he is on account of a growing loss of all desire for connexion which he has noticed lately. He has been recommended intercourse as a remedy for the spermatorrhoea, and has acquired some venereal affection as a result. This has deterred

him from all farther attempts, and he feels that if he were now to essay his powers again he would assuredly fail. Here I think disuse of function plays some part, but is assisted by real disorder. There is no fact in pathology better established than that a structure, a muscle for instance, if never exercised, will waste and become impotent. And although the function is here more intermittent than in ordinary muscular motion, yet it is quite contrary to reason and analogy to suppose that a forced unnatural disuse can fail to affect its capacity. Spermatorrhœa and temporary impotence are easily heightened by the action, both on mind and body, of any infection, and the depressing treatment adopted to remove it, and it is better that this should at once be explained to such a patient.

A gentleman consulted me for seminal emissions. He was six-and-twenty, delicate looking, and highly intellectual. He was an ardent student, and from moral motives had never indulged in connexion; he had never fallen into the habit of masturbation, and did not contemplate marriage at present. Emissions had come on many years previously, had run through their worst phases, and were now diminishing in number; they had ceased to produce any sensation, and were becoming smaller in quantity; erections, even when he was exposed to excitement, were imperfect. I startled this patient, who had never done anything for the complaint, by telling him that if he lost another year he would become impotent, and this was undoubtedly the fact. Such cases could easily be paralleled. For instance, a gentleman consulted me in December, 1877. He was then little more than twenty-six, yet, according to his statement, he had for quite a year and a half noticed a great diminution in the vigour of the erections. During the last two months this had become so aggravated, that when he came to me he described himself as never having anything like a proper erection, a state of matters which seriously alarmed him. This patient had never had connexion, and though he had emissions for a long time he had never suffered severely from them.

In a previous edition of this work it was stated, that a man who remains continent can hardly reach twenty-six without becoming partially if not wholly impotent, that even at twenty-five



years of age there is a risk, and that it is doubtful whether complete immunity from this result exists at twenty-four, a statement which awakened some very strong censure. In the main I still believe it to be true, but no doubt it was put forward in so obscure a shape as to convey a very erroneous impression. What ought to have been said was this. Of those who remain continent up to twenty-six a certain proportion do become wholly or partially impotent; what relation their number bears to that of those who escape all such results I have no means of knowing, but judging from my experience it is not so insignificant as might be supposed. I never meant to convey the impression that such patients invariably lapse into total and incurable impotence; on the contrary, I believe their state to be easily remediable. Left unattended to, however, the organs in many persons do not spontaneously regain their natural tone, and at the end of as much as thirteen years of married life I have found there had been no improvement. This condition is, so far as I know, peculiar to those suffering from emissions, but in some instances these had never been of great severity. The above description has now and then been spontaneously verified by patients, and applies, with ever lessening accuracy and force, to the age of twenty-five and of twenty-four, the latter being, with one or two exceptions, the earliest age at which I have seen this disposition set up in a marked form.

We often meet with cases in which a man is only impotent at certain times, or with certain persons. This was defined by Mr. Hunter as resulting from "a want of due harmony between the mind and body;" in its mode of operation it is exactly similar to that form of impotence in which the patient is beset with the fixed idea that he is incapable of performing connexion, and fails accordingly; as a man breaks down in a difficult leap when he is convinced that he cannot succeed. The fact is undoubted; and I believe I may say, that if it be not generally known among medical men, it is because these matters have been so neglected. This want of harmony is very common among spermatorrhœa patients, and there is a form of it peculiar to them; that is, when men have become alarmed, and attempt connexion just to see whether they are impotent or not. Under such circumstances they generally fail, as might be expected; and the result is greater



alarm the next time and certainty of failure than ever, although there is really not the least necessity for either.

Hunter seems to have been disposed to ascribe to the mind more control over connexion than I think can be conceded to it. He defines copulation as an act of the body, the spring of which is in the mind. We must in that case admit the presence of mind in all the lower animals, as they not only desire it as powerfully as man himself, but struggle for the possession of it with a ferocity in no way second to that evinced by him. Bird, beast, fish, and insect fight to the very death for their mates. In the pairing season the timid drake will struggle for possession of the female till he is beaten nearly senseless; the equally timid stag assumes, at rutting time, a courage to which he is otherwise a stranger; the male salmon pursues or accompanies the female for hundreds of miles, and engages in the most desperate conflicts in order that he may fertilize her spawn; the butterfly braves death and capture to reach the female insect. Besides, it is most certain that men are powerfully impelled to connexion even when their better reason (or mind) condemns the act. I am therefore rather disposed to view the desire for copulation as an instinct in man's natural state, *as certainly called into action by its normal exciting cause as the expulsion of the contents of the bowels and bladder is brought into play by the presence of feces or urine*, but more capable of being subjugated by the will, especially when the desire is feebly developed, as sometimes happens in men of very weakly frame or great mental capacity.

All these forms, especially if aggravated by neglected emissions, or, when the power of connexion has been retrieved, by excessive sexual intercourse, tend steadily and irresistibly to bring on the remaining variety, decline in the power of erection, often accompanied almost to the last by some amount of premature ejaculation. These cases are met with principally at and after middle age, often in persons who have not suffered from any kind of nervous excitement, and who have got over their fear of not having connexion properly. Imagination therefore may very likely not be busy here, and the symptoms are possibly due to some organic change in the muscles and nerves implicated in the function. The disposition to this state may be increased by certain causes

which were, I believe, wholly unnoticed till I pointed them out a few years ago, showing that impotence might be brought on suddenly, or rather that a long-lurking tendency to it might be suddenly developed in persons advanced in life, by very slight and unlooked-for causes, such as injuries *e.g.* fractures, neuralgia, pain, indigestion, cerebral excitement, long-continued fatigue, &c. As a matter of course, excessive connexion and masturbation, in an enfeebled state of the health, tend to induce this result, and very justly; he who recklessly yields to every prompting of sensual indulgence must count upon the forfeit.

The doctrine which I ventured to put forth is that the function of generation, being the most truly remittent of all we are acquainted with, being liable to cease for years, or even for life, without any injury to the health, may be supplanted by disordered innervation of some other part. By disordered innervation I mean pain, either gouty, neuralgic, &c., in some *near* part, especially about the neck of the bladder, or else exalted function in some *distant* part, as indigestion, cerebral excitement; and by supplanted, I mean, that when these actions are set up, the function of generation lessens, as if the vital force necessary for it were absorbed by the diseased action. It may also be mechanically interrupted, as by stricture, &c.

As some of the conclusions thus drawn have been disputed, I venture to give a few cases.

CASE I. *From neuralgic (?) Pain.*—A patient, an elderly man, had suddenly become impotent; it had not occurred, as it mostly does, on the advance of old age, with a gradual decay, the emissions becoming less and less frequent; on the contrary, it had come on quite suddenly, and at the same time severe pain had set in at the neck of the bladder. This continued, with great irritability of the bladder, and pain at the glans penis; sometimes a little blood came after passing urine. He was sounded for stone, but none being found, it was considered ulcer of the neck of the bladder. To relieve this, injections of nitrate of silver were tried; the first produced great pain, but some relief followed and a second was given; the pain after this grew more and more severe, and now never left him day or night. While at the height of his sufferings he was attacked with dysentery. I was in the country

at the time, and on my return to town I found him rapidly sinking. He died shortly after, and I examined the body. Great part of the colon, and about eighteen inches of the ileum, were almost gangrenous; but nothing abnormal was discovered in the genito-urinary organs, except that the mucous membrane of the prostatic part of the urethra was of a vivid red; the testes, ducts, &c., seemed quite natural.

When Rousseau, in whom both cerebral excitement and spasmodic pain at the neck of the bladder, with retention of urine, occurred at a very early age, producing temporary impotence, died after a life of torment, no organic change was found, although the organs were examined with the greatest care; so that the physicians concluded that his sufferings had been occasioned by a spasmodic state of the parts near the neck of the bladder, or of the neck itself.

CASE 2.—A patient from the country laid his case before me, and soon after called to have my opinion on it; it was one of severe spermatorrhœa and impotence. He was a professional man; middle-aged, pale and dyspeptic, highly nervous, and had never enjoyed very robust health. According to his account, he had never had any symptoms till about two years previously, when they followed almost immediately on a severe attack of tic douloureux. Emissions at night began; being a married man, he abstained from connexion, and when at the lapse of a few months, he recommenced, he was alarmed at finding that it took place very imperfectly. He then consulted different surgeons, who ordered him sulphate of iron, and astringent mixtures, without much benefit. I found his digestion considerably impaired, and first of all attempted to set this right, and then prescribed quinine, cold bathing, and a blister.

The first attack on the disease was successful enough, and the emissions were speedily reduced to one a month. Soon after this he again came up to town, and informed me that though he had continued the medicine, diet, &c., as prescribed, the emissions were again becoming more numerous. Tincture of steel was now recommended, with another blister, a full meat diet, and active exercise. When I received my last communication from him, though his general health had considerably improved, the emis-



sions occurred once a week, in spite of attempts at connexion, and the impotence was decidedly worse.

Although such cases are not at all numerous, yet I have now seen a sufficient number to justify me in concluding, that what sets up neuralgia will sometimes bring on an attack of impotence, usually accompanied by emissions.

CASE 3. *From gouty Pain.*—A gentleman, a strong, healthy active man, in the prime of life, consulted me respecting impotence, of which he gave the following account :—After having been long tormented with flying gout, notwithstanding a very temperate life, he had been suddenly relieved from it in the great toe, the last spot it had settled in, and had been attacked with great pain in the urethra, and some difficulty in passing urine. A bougie was passed, and as the obstruction yielded and recurred very suddenly, the disease was pronounced spasmodic stricture; but from the history of the case, and having met with several very analogous instances, I am induced to suspect that gout in the urethra was the disease, and the stricture and impotence (which was not caused here by the stricture) were its effects.

Gout, however, when severe, will do even more than this. I had a gentleman under my care who suffered most severely from this painful complaint. Having to live a hard, anxious life, he was quite unable to pay sufficient attention to his health, and to get the rest he imperatively required. By the time he had pretty well thrown off the gout, which tormented him almost incessantly for three or four years, all capacity for connexion had forsaken him. At first, when he had recovered from an attack, he used to feel quite competent; but he soon began to observe that after each fit of suffering this grew less and less, and that there was none at all for a short time before the gout came on, the latter gradually gaining the ascendancy.

CASE 4. *From heightened Function in other Parts.*—A gentleman applied in extreme terror at having become suddenly impotent. As he appeared young and healthy, I felt surprised at this. It turned out that having neglected his studies until his examination was close at hand, he had become alarmed, and had betaken himself to them in the most irrational manner, going to bed with his book in his hand, ready to begin in the morning, and sitting

up in bed to sleep, for fear, if he lay down, he should sleep too long. He had become exceedingly nervous, and found that on thinking of connexion vigorous erections came on ; but that, on attempting connexion, they immediately subsided, and, while subsiding, emission took place. Quiet, relaxation, and mild aperients soon restored the balance of the functions.

These cases are far from uncommon. Intense mental application, confinement, and inattention to health, may, especially in young, irritable, unhealthy subjects, when they at the same time impair nutrition, easily bring on a state of temporary impotence, which the fears of the patient soon magnify into something of alarming importance. It would be well if all forms of impotence were as remediable as this, which is generally subdued by exercise, society, relaxation, and such measures as tend to improve the health.

Mr. Curling also mentions<sup>1</sup> a case of sudden impotence from dyspepsia brought on by dining imprudently. He attributes<sup>2</sup> great importance to the action of irritative dyspepsia and oxalate of lime in the urine as a cause of impotence, and has also noticed impotence from albuminuria. This agrees with the experience of Dr. William Frazer, who has usually seen oxalate of lime associated with dread of impotence (imaginary form), and, in approaching attacks, with positive loss of sexual power ; and also, regarding the first of these disorders, with my experience, which is quite to the effect that what sets up bad dyspepsia is very apt to bring on an attack of impotence.

*From Stricture.*—When impotence comes on in patients still in the prime of life, as from forty to fifty years of age, the emissions growing gradually more feeble and fewer in number, a mere sensation accompanying them, like that of evacuating urine or passing fæces, stricture may often be suspected. It is the more important to attend to this, as many of these patients persist in stating that the stream of urine is as large as ever it was ; or, never having had gonorrhœa, and having heard that strictures only follow upon neglected disease of this kind, they cannot understand how one can occur without the other. In cases of this class the stricture appears often to arise from a fold of the mucous mem-

<sup>1</sup> *Op. citat.*, p. 422.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 423.

brane growing up,—a fact I think shown in the speedy relief given by the application of caustic.

CASE 5.—I dissected, with great care, the genito-urinary organs of a gentleman who had died of irritative fever, consequent on an operation performed for the relief of an impermeable stricture. He had become impotent about the time he began to notice a material diminution of the stream in passing urine. On examination, the urethra was found extremely narrowed near the bulb. Close to this part were two passages, one lying behind the other; they were on the lower side of the urethra, and were both larger than the contracted part of the tube: they were about four lines long, and were lined throughout with mucous membrane; the posterior lip of the second almost entirely overlapped and occluded the natural opening. No instrument could have been introduced into the bladder, and the exit of urine could only have taken place by the force of the stream pressing down the valve-like fold of mucous membrane; that of the semen must, I think, have been very imperfect, if not impossible.

CASE 6. *From Injury of other Organs.*—I was consulted by an elderly gentleman, who stated he was impotent. He was, and always had been, in the enjoyment of a fair amount of health. He had married early, and lived a regular, temperate life, subject only to slight fits of indisposition, which interfered little with his general health. His wife bore him several fine children, and he had never committed any excesses. He had latterly become impotent, which, upon minute questioning, appeared due to the following circumstances:—About five months previously his foot had been severely crushed, owing to a heavily-laden vehicle passing over it. He was attended by an eminent surgeon, who succeeded in making an excellent cure. The severe nature of the accident for several weeks necessarily precluded all attempts at connexion with his wife, which had continued much as usual up to this time; but as he began to recover, he grew more and more uneasy at finding that nearly all desire, so far as was manifested by erections, seemed to have left him, and that on essaying connexion, the penis remained quite flaccid. Two more instances of the same result from injury to the foot have occurred in my practice. In one, where this member was so badly hurt that, at



the end of two years the patient could only walk about a little with great difficulty, complete impotence set in six months after the injury, though the patient was only twenty-nine years old when it happened. In a case of another kind, where the patient was cut about the face and shaken by a railroad accident, the spine not being injured, the patient, at the end of about a year began to find that he was completely losing virility, without there being all this time the least disturbance of any other function. In addition to these the particulars of a case were communicated to me by a friend, in which impotence seemed to have resulted from an injury to the arm and corresponding side of the trunk. Several other cases have been collected by friends and noted down by myself, but being anxious not to swell the bulk of this work I omit them.

*CASE 7. From Excitement and natural Irritability of the Organs.*—In addition to similar facts recorded by other writers, I venture to give the following :—Mr. C. consulted me. He was twenty-four years of age, healthy, but subject occasionally to a little indigestion and costiveness. He was easily excited, and of a shy, retiring disposition ; owing to which, and to his rooted dread of infection, he had never ventured on connexion. Some years ago he suffered from irritability of the bladder ; the case was rather obscure, and at the wish of his medical adviser he consulted Mr. Syme, who sounded him, but found neither calculus nor stricture. About five years ago he began to notice an occasional emission, which was repeated at long intervals, for about four years and a half, when having resolved upon marrying, the emissions began to grow much more numerous, and shortly amounted to nearly one every night ; they were seldom less than three a week. He was greatly excited about his marriage, and to this he attributed the frequency of the emissions. When he married he found himself quite unable to perform connexion. I carefully examined the testes and penis ; they were well developed, and the urethra was perfectly free from stricture.

*From long-continued regular, but moderate Connexion.*—In some persons the organs require longer or shorter periods of repose. Marriage and moderation are not always a safeguard ; and unless the warnings of Nature are promptly listened to, temporary, if not permanent, impotence may follow.

CASE 8.—A gentleman consulted me on account of impotence. He had enjoyed tolerable health, but had always been rather subject to headache, constipation, and catarrh. At times during the last year or two, he had been attacked by indigestion, till then an unknown complaint to him. This he ascribed, in part, to the long-continued easterly winds prevailing at the time, which not only made him feel ill, but also thoroughly wretched from the dry dusty feeling they occasioned in his skin, and even in everything he touched; he also complained of excessive languor. He suffered little when the winds were accompanied by rain; and during one wet autumn he was quite well, though often drenched to the skin. Some share of the blame might justly, I think, be laid upon his habits; for though extremely temperate, he was a smoker, took little exercise, and was rather slothful. Up to his twenty-second year he had rarely indulged in connexion. When little more than twenty-three he formed an illicit connexion with a lady in his own rank of life. This was his only excess, and it was not a great one. From that time till his marriage, which took place in his thirtieth year, he was far more continent than most men, and even after marriage he committed no excess, but almost from that day till I saw him, he had (with the exception of the time of his wife's first confinement) had connexion once in the twenty-four hours—this had gone on for two years. Latterly the emissions had frequently taken place while the penis was but little erected. Of this class of cases I have since seen many instances.

Cases of impotence have been recorded from strange causes, and in others the impotence has been attributed to one cause, while one more potent has been left unnoticed. Wehle, for instance,<sup>1</sup> gives an instance of impotence from inhaling the smoke of henbane to remove the toothache. Now spermatorrhœa and a certain degree of impotence do occasionally follow severe toothache. I have known as many as twenty emissions succeed a bad attack of facial neuralgia where the patient was previously almost free from them, and I think it is probable that in M. Wehle's case the loss of power was due quite as much to the

<sup>1</sup> *Oesterreich. Med. W. Schrift*; 1843, No. 24.

toothache as to the henbane, especially as sedatives are often prescribed in large quantities without inducing this effect.

One might imagine that a patient would receive a hint that he was becoming impotent with alarm. Strange to say, the more confirmed a case the less prevalent do we find any feeling of the kind; and often when the patient has reached the prime or decline of life, it seems to be regarded rather as a relief.

In one of the earlier editions of this work I pointed out the extraordinary feeling of cold some of these patients suffer from. A sense of cold in the scrotum, sometimes in small patches, sometimes attacking a surface as large as the palm of the hand, is not uncommon in many persons in whom impotence has commenced, and I have seen it prevail to an extraordinary degree in some persons who had allowed the malady to go on unchecked for a long time, even extending over the whole surface, the limited form, however, being much the most common. One man, when slightly undressed in my presence, shivered with cold, though it was June; another, a strong burly-looking countryman, told me, that even in the south of France he could walk out on the hottest day wrapped up in a great-coat; "he was never warm," he said.

This state is not in any way necessarily connected with feeble health. I have just said that one patient was a specimen of the Dandie Dinmont breed, and I will adduce one or two more instances out of several.

A gentleman, a strong wiry-looking man, very fond of field sports, a keen shot, good angler, and remarkably bold climber, told me that he was constantly sensible of a feeling of cold in the testes and scrotum, even in the hottest weather, and that this increased when he was out of sorts. Another patient, who consulted me for the same symptom, said that he never had a day's illness, that he came of a remarkably healthy family, and that he was so strong that he felt as if he could do almost anything. While he was under my care I was consulted by a farmer who suffered from this coldness. He was quite six feet high, and most powerfully built.

It is not, however, absolutely limited to impotence. I have seen it in tolerably young patients suffering from spermatorrhea only. For instance, I have just had under my care a patient in



no way impotent, only twenty-six years old, who had suffered in this way for a considerable time past; and Dicenta observed cold feeling of the genitals in five, and loss of internal warmth in nine, out of a hundred and fifty-five cases of spermatorrhœa.

I give it as a fact, which I have had no chance of verifying, but which has been communicated to me by men on whose truthfulness I believe I might implicitly rely, that many of these patients, even while labouring under progressive impotence and only partially cured spermatorrhœa, have remarkably fine children. Thus one young clergyman, so situated, reported that the surgeon, who attended his wife in her first confinement, said the child was the biggest he had ever brought into the world. A gentleman, in whom erectile power seemed to have ceased at quite an early age, stated that his four children were reputed to be four of the finest in the county, and so on.

*Mode in which Impotence takes place.*—There are I presume only two modes in which this result ensues, viz., by the agency of injuries or excessive action. The former may act by destroying, dividing, or compressing the nerves leading to the generative organs; the other apparently by causing such amount of reflex action as to set up changes, molecular degeneration in fact, in the structure of the nerves, which, though not perceptible to the microscope, are yet quite sufficient to prevent the exercise of their natural function.

We cannot certainly demonstrate such a hypothesis as accurately as we do the binomial theorem, or prove the weight of Jupiter against the earth, but we have some pretty strong proofs. We know the nervous structures are implicated to a great extent in this function; we know that hyper-action has been set up previously, and that excessive action will produce alteration of tissue, as in inflammation; and it appears to me a legitimate conclusion that this is what happens here.

*Prognosis of Impotence.*—Impotence consequent upon wasting of the testicles, severe injuries, and disease or softening of the spinal cord, is necessarily incurable. Long-continued, steadily increasing impotence from excess, *especially when the patient has passed his thirty-fifth year*, must be regarded in a very unfavourable light. All other cases may, I think, be cured.

## CHAPTER IV.

### TREATMENT OF SPERMATORRHŒA.

THE foregoing account of the history and pathology of spermatorrhœa is necessarily brief and imperfect ; but however barren a field this part of our subject may be, that of treatment is still more sterile, and in the course of a long search I have not met with much that showed a determination on the part of the writer to persevere in his observations till he had probed the subject to the bottom. We find many valuable hints as to treatment, but little in the way of an attempt to grasp the subject as a whole. Authors too often seem disposed to rely upon one remedy as a specific to the neglect of all others.

As the divisions of this complaint differ from each other only in their severity, it may facilitate a clear comprehension of what is now to be stated, if the whole subject be considered under one head. In advanced stages of the malady the treatment must simply be more energetic and unremitting ; and with this guide before me, I will now proceed to lay down what appear to me to be the three great rules as to the treatment of spermatorrhœa, which are :—

1. To see if there be any complications, such as dyspepsia or neuralgia, which would tend to keep up either emissions or impotence ; as until these are remedied there is no lasting improvement. Above all things it is important to overcome the dyspepsia, seeing that, till this is done, the patient's system will often not support the medicines which are most called for.

2. Ever to bear in mind that the great difficulty is to reduce the number of true nocturnal emissions.

3. That after youth the disorder has little, if any, tendency to get well of itself, and that therefore no quarter should be shown it. It is like a conflagration, which can only be safely dealt with by thoroughly extinguishing it.

I will now assume the surgeon has satisfied himself that the case in hand is one simply of nocturnal emissions occurring to such an extent as to injure the health, and proceed to examine the treatment of this part of the subject. And here I may remark, in contradistinction to those who think internal treatment is of little service in these cases, that my observations have led me to an opposite conclusion. I have almost invariably found that these patients require a systematic course of medicine, and that, if benefited at all, it has always been by a combination of internal with other means. Farther, I can safely say, that by far the greatest number of the patients I have seen required a tonic and sedative treatment ; and therefore it may be best, first of all, to consider, *seriatim*, the principal members of these two groups.

INTERNAL REMEDIES :—TONICS : (a.) *Quinine*.—As a general principle it may suffice to say, that when the patient complains of want of appetite and energy, and when the tongue is foul and moist, quinine may generally be given with the best results. Any restlessness, irritability, dyspepsia, or headache, arising from its use, can generally be overcome by the aid of mild aperients and carminatives, and indeed I think *it is much better to combine these with it whether such symptoms are present or not*. It is rarely requisite to give it in doses of more than a grain, or a grain and a half, twice or thrice a day at first. In many cases I have, however, used it much more freely, raising the dose to three, or even four or five grains three times a day, not even suspending it at once on account of the buzzing in the ears complained of by some persons. At times the patient appeared to derive benefit from the increased doses, whereas in others it was doubtful whether they were of more use than the moderate ones. I also, in about thirty cases, added tincture of krameria in doses of half a drachm to forty minims three times a day, and in some instances, I thought, with advantage ; but I have gradually come to doubt the soundness of the first conclusions, and have therefore abandoned the use of it. In some cases where the constitution has been tried by a tropical climate, and in very irritable persons, quinine cannot be tolerated at first in doses likely to be at all efficient. Here the dilute nitric or nitro-hydrochloric acid forms an excellent substitute. Like quinine, these medicines are usually best given



just before breakfast and dinner, or breakfast and lunch ; some patients, however, prefer taking them directly after food.<sup>1</sup>

There are some persons who cannot, and some who fancy they cannot, take quinine, and it is quite as difficult to deal with the one as with the other. One patient assured me that as soon as he had swallowed a dose of it, the semen began to ooze through his scrotum ! At the same time the sufferings of other patients are anything but imaginary. One strong, healthy man, had such severe urticaria developed by it that I at once gave it up ; and another, who was very anxious to be cured, being on the point of marriage, said that he was invariably so ill after quinine or any similar medicine, that he would rather face the worst than continue it. Another patient assured me that he had repeatedly taken quinine, and that it had on every occasion disagreed with him. Notwithstanding this I again prescribed it in very small doses, but he came at the end of a few days and begged of me to order something else, as the quinine was making him so low, weak, and irritable, and certainly he looked so. Again, I have met with evidence, which I have been forced against my will to admit, that quinine in a few rare cases undoubtedly increases the excitability and emissions. But these anomalies are happily enough

<sup>1</sup> I venture to offer one or two formulæ :

- ℞ Quinîæ sulphatis, gr. xij.
- Magnes. sulphatis, ℥iv.
- Acidi sulphurici dil., ℥j.
- Tinct. cardam. c., ℥vj.
- Spir. chloroform, ℥i.
- Aquæ cinnam., ad ℥vj. ℥
- Coch. amp. i. bis terve quotidie sumendum.
- ℞ Pil. rhei compos. ℥j.
- divide in pil. vj. i. omni noct. sumend.
- ℞ Acidi nitrici dil., ℥i.
- Syrupi aurantii, ℥vi.
- Tinct. cardam. comp., ℥iij.
- Liquoris strychniæ. m. i.
- Infus. caryophyll., ℥iii.
- ,, calumb., ad ℥vi. ℥.
- Pars sexta bis terve quotidie sumenda.

The infusions to be made with boiling water, and not allowed to stand more than five to ten minutes.

very rare, and it would not be hazarding much to say, that most spermatorrhœa patients bear quinine very well.

The deafness and noise in the head occasionally noticed belong to another class of symptoms, and indicate, not so much that the medicine is unsuited to the constitution, as that the dose is large enough, and that the use of the medicine must not be kept up too long.

However experienced a surgeon may be, he can see but a little way into the future, and I can scarcely insist too strongly on the necessity for watching carefully at first over the progress of the case under this or any other treatment. Patients often, indeed generally, fancy that their medical attendant can prescribe something which will at once meet the difficulties of the case, and which may accordingly be continued for an indefinite period. But nothing could be more mistaken than such an idea, especially with respect to quinine. A dose which may be perfectly suited to the emergency to-day will have lost all its power a week hence ; complications of the most unexpected nature will spring up, and however simple and straightforward the surgeon may think his directions are, it will only too frequently happen that the patient has misunderstood them. For all these reasons, I consider that at this period of the case too much pains cannot be taken to secure the full effect of the medicine, and this can only be done by seeing the patient at stated intervals, however irksome this may be to both.

(b.) *Tincture of the Sesquichloride of Iron.*—But however useful in restoring strength and appetite, quinine, in the power of controlling emissions, stands much below the remedy just named, which, indeed, according to my experience, is by far the most potent that can be employed at the outset of treatment. In the earliest editions of this work only a very meagre account of the action of this tincture was given ; indeed it was not till I had used it for a long time, that I discovered the reason why it failed in so many cases and was yet so beneficial in others. Properly given, it is one of the safest and best medicines the surgeon can use. But it is no specific ; the surgeon enjoys no immunity here from that ceaseless attention and watchfulness which alone insure success, and routine prescribing will, as in other disorders,

produce its usual fruits, chance cures and frequent failures on the part of the practitioner, and scepticism on that of the patient as to the real powers of the remedy ; for men ever have judged, and in such cases ever will judge, by results alone ; and will rather be cured by the most consummate empiric, than hear the most lucid and convincing explanation of the reason why they are no better. It is for these reasons that I venture to lay down the following rules, which will perhaps enable the reader to carry out the treatment successfully.

1. The first precaution in giving the tincture is to begin by ordering it in moderate doses, as twenty or thirty minims twice a day. If at the expiration of four or five days no unpleasant symptoms have arisen, the quantity may be gradually increased till the full dose, sixty minims three times a day, or as much as the patient can bear, is attained. Many persons can take a drachm and a half, and even a hundred minims, three times, or as much as eighty minims, or even ninety, four times a day. One patient wrote to me saying he had felt no inconvenience whatever from six drachms daily, and was quite willing, if I approved of the suggestion, to try an ounce ; but as he was getting better, I did not like to risk anything that might lead to a relapse ; another said that he took four hundred minims a day, and a third, not a very strong looking man either, told me that he was taking three drachms and a half three times a day.

But if coldness at the stomach, sickness, nausea, or a feeling of distension and griping come on, the dose is as large as we can hope to give for the time being. It is not, however, always necessary on this account to diminish the amount taken ; for very often in a few days these symptoms disappear, and so soon as there seems no prospect of their return, the surgeon may again increase the dose of the tincture.

2. When the patient has long suffered from painful digestion with flatulence, and this is immediately aggravated by the smallest doses of the steel, it should at once be given up, and pepsine, aromatics, and mild purgatives prescribed, to remove or allay these symptoms. It now and then happens with such patients, that these remedies agree so well at first as to delude them into the belief that the panacea is found, but they really do little more



than set the digestion right ; little material progress is made till the steel is resumed. This, if possible, should be done soon. Some few persons, however, never bear the tincture well, and then it is better to try and do with quinine alone ; others are afraid to take steel, having, they allege, been told by dentists that it injures the teeth. The latter difficulty is generally soon got over by recommending the patient to take the steel well diluted, to wash the mouth out after each dose, to brush the teeth every morning with red cinchona tooth powder, and, as a last resource, to take the steel through an acid tube ; in some few cases, however, I have found that I could not overcome the objections entertained against it. The blackening of the tongue which some patients report, and the blackening of the stools so generally observed, are matters of no moment.

3. Again, some patients suffer principally from weakness with great irritability, sleeplessness, accompanied often by vivid and continuous dreaming when asleep, and despondency when awake ; with a coated state of the tongue, constipation and turbid condition of the urine. All these symptoms may occur without any marked disturbance of the digestion. In these cases the best plan is to prescribe a light diet, with two or three extra glasses of wine daily, and to give mild tonics and bitters ; as, for instance, dilute phosphoric acid in doses of twenty minims, with an ounce of infusion of chirata or calumba, and a little syrup of orange-peel ; or ten-minim doses of dilute sulphuric acid in conjunction with syrup of orange-peel and compound tincture of cinnamon or spirit of nutmeg. Dilute nitric acid, too, answers very well in some of these cases, and may be given in conjunction with infusion of calumba and cloves.

When these symptoms are effectually removed, which is generally not a very difficult matter, the steel may be commenced with, and after this it is rarely necessary to suspend its exhibition ; still less is it requisite to give medicine for every symptom the patient complains of, for some of these patients suffer in so many ways that it is hard to say which organ is most out of sorts. The best plan seems to be to disregard all minor considerations, and keep only the goal in view. In this, as in many other cases, *I believe the only safe method to be for the surgeon, when he has once chalked*

*out the line of treatment which he means to follow, to think nothing of whether the patient is at first better or worse, satisfied or dissatisfied, but to keep to those measures which experience has shown will generally land him in success.* With returning health all these petty troubles will yield, and the patient will wonder how he ever came to be so foolish as to frighten himself in this way about them.

At the outset the surgeon often has to struggle with the scepticism of those patients who have previously taken steel and derived no benefit from it, or even suffered from increased dyspepsia after using it. As there is no disguising its taste, and as many of these patients can now read latin prescriptions as well as we can, the surgeon may as well tell the patient at once, that in all probability he has taken it in too small doses and without proper precautions ; that no good could result from using it as he has hitherto done, and that he is now to make a trial of its powers on a widely different system.

4. Some persons suffer from constipation when beginning with the tincture ; this, however, constitutes no reason for abandoning it. A moderate dose of the aloes and myrrh pill, or a combination of compound colocynth with blue pill and hyoscyamus, or of spanish soap, extract of rhubarb, and jalap and hemlock, soon proves effectual.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes the circumstances of the case call for the addition of remedies which act more upon the colon and rectum, and then scammony, galbanum or podophyllin may be requisite ;<sup>2</sup> but so long as the leading indications, to act gently on

<sup>1</sup> The reader can try the following, or any other he likes better :—

℞ Pil. colocynth. compos., ʒss.

— hydrarg., ʒss.

Extracti hyoscyam. ʒj.

Misce et divide in pil., xij.

℞ Extracti jalapæ,

Extracti rhei,

— hyoscyami,

Saponis duri. āā gr. vij.

Olei cinnam. m. j. Misce, fiant pil. vj.

One of either of these pills may be taken two, three, or four times a week.

<sup>2</sup> ℞ Resinæ podophylli, gr. ij.

Hyd. subchlorid., gr. iv.

Pil. cambogiæ. compos. ʒj.

— assafœtid., comp. ʒss.

Olei cassiæ m. ij. ℥. ft. pil. xij.

the bowels and liver, and obviate griping, are kept in view, there can be little difficulty in finding appropriate means.

Strange to say, when the patient has taken the tincture for some little time, he often begins to find that his bowels act far more freely than he wishes, and at last makes out that the medicine which constipated him at first now purges him—a fact by which he is rather puzzled. I believe the explanation to be this. A very small dose of steel will constipate as effectually as a large one, but while a small dose of the hydrochloric acid has no appreciable action on the bowels, a larger one purges somewhat freely.

5. One of the most necessary precautions is to see that a tincture of uniform strength and purity is used. Those accustomed to prescribe this medicine very frequently, may perhaps know that a great difference exists between the action of the tinctures usually sold, but I am disposed to think the profession, generally speaking, are not aware of the fact. A short experience will, however, convince any person that such is the case, and that it exerts so great an influence as to account for much of the disparity observed in the effects of this medicine. I have, after trying several tinctures, found none equal to that prepared by Mr. Thomas, of Pall Mall. It is not so acid as those made by other chemists; it does not affect the teeth so unpleasantly; and finally it does not occasion so much griping and flatulence; qualities due to the great care with which it is prepared, and to the fact that every step in the process, from the first to the last, is carried out at Mr. Thomas's establishment, contrary, I believe, to the practice of other chemists. Finally I may observe of this tincture, that it does not deposit the iron as some tinctures, made by very good chemists, do.

The tincture often sold in shops is of such an irritating quality, that the dose necessary to produce some effect upon the spermatorrhœa will make some patients ill. Of this I have had so many proofs, that I now always caution patients rather to do without the steel than procure it from a source upon which no reliance can be placed. Indeed, the preparation is constantly retailed at such a price, that to realize any profit it must consist almost solely of muriatic acid.



The reader has no doubt noticed that I speak of the tincture of the sesquichloride and not of the perchloride ; but the fact is, that I have, after many trials, completely lost faith in the latter, which I believe to be a mistake and a failure. Its strength is most uncertain even when made with the greatest care, and when hastily prepared, as is sometimes the case, the iron begins to precipitate almost immediately. It would be far better to trust to the solution of the perchloride (liquor. ferri. perchlor. Ph. Brit.).

6. The tincture should be measured in a minim glass, as no reliance can be placed on any other plan. The surgeon may easily convince himself of the necessity for this precaution by dropping a fluid drachm, which he will find is equivalent to a hundred and fifty or sixty drops.

7. Sometimes when toleration of the steel has been quite established, a relapse in the spermatorrhœa may ensue without any apparent cause. The remedy for this is to give three or four injections in the manner to be described afterwards, and then to increase the dose of steel fifteen or twenty minims. And this should be done at once, for, contrary to what might have been expected, improvement has in such cases more frequently followed from raising the dose *per saltum* than from adding only two or three minims at a time.

Thus a gentleman who had long been taking sixty minims of the tincture three times daily, without ever escaping for more than a week from emissions, tried the experiment of taking eighty minims four times a day ; the emissions ceased for nineteen days, and from that time he progressed steadily.

Another patient, who was taking forty minims three times daily, raised the dose all at once to a drachm ; the nocturnal emissions, which had only, after long perseverance, been reduced to one in ten days, were almost directly after lessened to half the number : here also the improvement was permanent.

In a third and most obstinate case the patient, after more than two months' unremitting use of a drachm three times a day, was ordered four injections and a drachm and a half three times a day ; at the end of two months he had only had one emission, and no relapse occurred. Many similar instances have been recorded in

my case-book, but perhaps these will be sufficient to fix attention upon this fact ; a most important one to remember, for sometimes if this golden opportunity be lost, if the tide be not taken at the turn, the chance may not again present itself. It is most necessary for the surgeon to impress upon the patient's mind, that his best chance of a rapid cure lies in giving the disorder no quarter.

Patients often fancy they can easily make up the lost way, but they commit a great mistake, and only too frequently find that a relapse is more obstinate than the original disorder. They might as well starve a plant, or stop its growth for a week or two, and then expect it to flourish as luxuriantly as before. I suppose the fact is, that at such times the nutrition is in a state which requires tonics as certainly as in a state of health it requires food and salt ; and the withholding of the one is as injurious as of the other.

Patients sometimes, with the best will, commit the mistake, when they are running short of tincture and are much pressed for time, of eking it out by taking less than the stated quantity, or omitting a dose now and then. A system more certain to end in failure could scarcely be pursued. I have known a patient, most attentive to his case, report that, while taking by a misapprehension two doses a day instead of three, he had relapsed so fast and steadily, that he could scarcely have gone back more on no medicine at all. Consequently, unless the full quantity can be had, the tincture had better be omitted altogether. After the first few weeks of using it, a pause of a day or two is often beneficial, particularly when the patient has got rather tired of it ; and later on, taking it for ten or twelve days, and then giving it up for twice as long, will often maintain the full therapeutic action of the steel quite as well as the daily use of it. But to the last it should only be given and suspended systematically.

Many surgeons combine steel and quinine in one prescription, but as far as my experiments and the histories of the cases collected in which these remedies had been tried in a combined form, warrant me in forming an opinion, it would certainly be, that they were ordered rather from a preconceived idea of the benefits that *were to arise* from their use, than from experience of

the good that had arisen in previous instances. The citrate of iron and quinine is occasionally valuable in cases where languor, loss of appetite, pallor, and dyspepsia are combined. Five grains two or three times a day are enough to begin with, but in most cases this dose will soon require to be considerably increased.

The late Dr. Fuller asked me to try the hypophosphite of iron in ten-grain doses. I have only twice prescribed it. In both cases it agreed very well with the patients, who were extremely dyspeptic, but no effect was produced on the emissions; possibly this might be in some measure due to the indigestion, and to the medicine not being continued for a sufficient length of time.

I have also tried dialysed iron, which agrees famously in anæmia; sulphate of iron with sulphuric acid; tincture of magnetic oxide and reduced iron. These medicines generally effected some improvement in the health, but as regards their power over the emissions they proved much inferior to the tincture.

(c.) *Ergot of Rye*.—First introduced, I believe, for the cure of this complaint by an Italian physician, who recommended it to M. Lallemand, seems destined to find its place at last among those unfortunate remedies which are one year vaunted as specifics and the next year forgotten; now dragged to light by experimental genius and again neglected for years, till they sink to their due level. It once bade fair to become a favourite remedy for gleet; now I doubt if one surgeon in a thousand ever uses it for such a purpose.

Whatever may have been said to the contrary, there is not the slightest reliance to be placed upon the *secale cornutum* as a specific. When used as an adjuvant to proper treatment, it often exercises considerable control over the emissions, and even in some cases of impotence appears to induce a very marked improvement in the character of the erections. But this is all that can in reason be said of it. I state this advisedly, for not only have I prescribed it in numerous cases without effect, but I have treated many patients to whom it had been given for a long time in both large and small doses, without any change, either for better or worse, taking place.

As an auxiliary means it is, however, well worth while to try it. A drachm three times a day is generally as much as the



stomach can well bear, and indeed it is best to begin with much smaller doses, say twenty to thirty minims twice daily. But to be of real service it should be administered in the form of Battley's Essence, a minim of which is equal to a grain of the rye; as to the preparation in the British Pharmacopœia it is quite a mistake, being less efficacious, disagreeable to take, and made, according to Mr. Squire, with only half the requisite quantity of ether. Battley's preparation is usually so well borne, that at the end of a short time the full dose may be taken.

All things considered, I think I may say that the cases most likely to be benefited by ergot of rye are those in which steel and quinine have already done some good, where there is little irritability of the system and some tendency to premature emissions and feebleness of the erections, and where local treatment can also be borne. In such cases I always prescribe it, and rarely fail to find it of service; some patients indeed have, of their own accord, stated that they had derived considerable benefit from this medicine.

Dr. C. L. Mitchell seems<sup>1</sup> to have given the ergot with great success in some severe cases. In one the patient, who never passed three nights consecutively without an emission, and who generally had, when they began, three emissions within the six hours, had become almost entirely incapable of attending to business. He was immediately relieved and ultimately quite cured by the daily use of thirty to sixty grains. In another case the patient, who was also an opium-eater, had become almost imbecile. The emissions were however entirely arrested within seven days from the beginning of the treatment. In a third, the patient was also suffering from irritable bladder and spasmodic stricture, but ten-grain doses of the ergot and three of camphor, every three hours, relieved him almost immediately. I at once confess that I have never had anything like such success as this, though I have given the ergot in all doses up to a drachm singly or conjoined with camphor.

SEDATIVES.—(a.) *Camphor* is often of great service in checking that form of spermatorrhœa which is apt to ensue in some irritable persons after an attack of gonorrhœa; it is likewise useful

<sup>1</sup> *American Medical Monthly*, April, 1861.

in recent and sudden outbreaks of the malady, and even in chronic cases, though occasionally it is not to be relied upon, it is often of great value. A gentleman, a surgeon, who sent his brother to me for this complaint, informed me that the constant use of the camphor alone had worked a complete and lasting cure, although the case was a very bad one. The patient resided in a distant part of Russia, where he could get no medicine except the spirit of camphor, of which he contrived to import two or three large bottles. He took it constantly in large doses for quite three years, and recovered so completely that he ventured to marry, a step of which he had previously entertained the greatest dread. When used, it may be given in doses of half a drachm to a drachm of the spirit, and this may be gradually increased to a drachm and a half, or two drachms. It is very easily taken in half a tumbler of water at bedtime. It is also a very good plan to have it in readiness by the bed-side, so that if the patient should be awakened by an erection, and can recover his consciousness sufficiently, he may at once take a dose. He may thus often prolong the period between the emissions, until the organs, no longer exhausted by the drain, recover their normal strength. The essence of camphor made by Messrs. Slinger and Barnett of York, is a much superior preparation in point of taste and convenience, being perfectly miscible with water. It may be given in doses of one to three drachms, and repeated like the spirit.

As the sedative action of camphor seems to pass off very quickly, while a certain amount of irritative action, which it clearly possesses on the stomach, throat, mouth, &c., is apt to increase to such an extent as to inconvenience the patient, I believe the best way of taking it to be in full doses, once, twice, or even thrice a night when an emission is impending, or when the patient is much pestered with erections; and so soon as ever an emission has occurred to give it up till another one is due, when it may be resumed. Taken in this way, its control over the disorder, though not always certain and often not very marked, is nevertheless in some cases indisputable. There seems to be very little doubt that it acts by securing rest to the parts.

Some persons do not bear camphor very well. It makes them sick, gives them a nasty taste in the mouth, induces sleeplessness

instead of quiet, and not unfrequently brings on a certain amount of headache. In many cases this state of matters soon passes off, especially if the patient be taking tonics at the time, but in others it has compelled me, in the long run, to give the medicine up.

(b.) *Lupulin*.—This remedy has been so strongly recommended by Dr. Sigmund, of Vienna, that I was induced to try it very largely. I am disposed to consider it a most agreeable medicine, and when a vegetable tonic and sedative is required it is an excellent adjunct; there its merits begin and end, and the surgeon who looks to it as a specific will most assuredly be disappointed. There is no such thing as a specific for spermatorrhœa; at any rate lupulin is not. I have given it to hundreds of patients, in every dose, from five grains to a drachm, taking every possible care to secure the best hops, and I have no hesitation in saying, that it cannot be relied on for producing anything beyond a mild and uncertain effect. Dr. Pischeck<sup>1</sup> found lupulin in these cases relieve indigestion and irritation in the urethra.

The surgeon should be careful to use only the lupulinic glands or grains, obtained from the strobules of the hop plant. They are of a reddish-golden colour, and granular, whereas the lupulin, or rather lupulite,<sup>2</sup> obtained by treating the aqueous extract of these grains with lime and alcohol, is a yellowish-white, uncrystallized powder, and is not to be relied on as a sedative in this affection.

Probably from a scruple to half a drachm will be as much as is generally required at the beginning, but I do not hesitate to give a drachm when necessary, and I have been told by patients that they had carried the dose much higher than this. One gentleman from Edinburgh assured me that he had taken three drachms daily for some time, with decided benefit; while another patient reported that he had taken three drachms at a dose, before going to bed, without any benefit at all. It may be worked up with a little strong spirit into a paste, and made into pills. If possible the patient should do this himself. Or the dose may be taken in a little of the Aylesbury condensed milk, or rubbed down with sugar in a mortar, as first recommended, I believe, by Dr. Bum-

<sup>1</sup> *Repert für Pharm.*, No. I., 1856. *Med.-Chir. Review*, vol. xviii.

<sup>2</sup> *Pereira's Materia Medica*, first edition, vol. ii, p. 741.



stead.<sup>1</sup> Like all strong preparations of hop, lupulin sometimes produces headache, but a few days' use of the remedy generally witnesses a termination of this symptom.

(c.) *Digitalin* may be ranked with this class of sedatives. It requires, however, to be handled with extreme care, from its well-known power of depressing the action of the heart. Most persons cannot bear more than the fiftieth of a grain at a time, and even this quantity should not be continued long. It may be given dissolved in spirit, or in the form of a pill, although Mr. Squire, in his excellent *Companion to the British Pharmacopœia*, is of opinion that it might with advantage have been omitted altogether from the latter work, the dose being, in practical dispensing, as difficult to weigh as it is to test the purity of the drug itself. Of course the latter must be secured, or it is of no use to prescribe the alkaloid, but I am not disposed to think that the difficulty of prescribing it ought to stand in the way. By triturating it previously with liquorice powder, a quarter of a grain may be weighed out, and beyond that it is unnecessary to go. I give below formulæ for exhibiting it either in solution or pill.<sup>2</sup> It is often of service in those cases of excessive excitement, venereal or purely nervous, which occur occasionally in spermatorrhœa, and used with ordinary care is a perfectly safe remedy. I have prescribed it with very good effect in these emergencies, rapidly subduing the excitement by its aid. In one case the effect was particularly well marked. The patient was suffering excessively from emissions. He complained of great pain in the back of the head after them; as also of most disagreeable and alarming pulsation in the neck, temples, &c. Yet the digitalin in small doses three times a day began to relieve the symptoms almost as soon as it was taken, and he got quite well. Another patient, very similarly

<sup>1</sup> *The Pathology and Treatment of Venereal Diseases.* By Freeman F. Bumstead, 1868, p. 81.

<sup>2</sup> ℞ Digitalini, grani quartam partem.  
 Spiritus rectificat. m. xx. ℥ et adde  
 Tinct. valerian. ammon. ʒxy. ss. ℥  
 ʒj. fluid. bis terve quotidie ex aquæ cyatho vin. sumend.  
 ℞ Digitalini, gr. ss.  
 Ext. anthem. ʒij. ℥ fiant pil. xxx.  
 i. bis terve quotidie sumenda.

situated and treated, reported also complete amendment from the use of the alkaloid. One gentleman found digitalin relieve "the thumping in his head." But I should never trust to such a remedy for the cure of the disease, and I should hesitate about using it for a long period, such as is required for the permanent removal of a chronic affection, unless I knew, first of all, more about its action. M. Lucien Corvisart reported<sup>1</sup> three cases as being greatly benefited by the use of digitalis, though not one of them seems to have been cured. Dr. Lescher employed this drug with good effects in one case, on M. Corvisart's plan, giving the powder in doses of one or two grains gradually increased up to eight grains.<sup>2</sup>

(*d.*) *Opium*.—When we require a sedative to relieve excitement, as also to soothe pain and aching in the urethra, and testicles, supposing the latter symptoms should happen to be present, which is not often the case, opium is the drug to trust to. It will often bring about a feeling of repose which nothing else can yield; and though it may sometimes produce a slight amount of constipation and headache, yet these are trifling ills compared to loss of sleep and nervousness. I should not advise opium however if it can be dispensed with, unless there be pain or sleeplessness. Its power of checking emissions, except when these complications are distinctly instrumental in keeping them up, I believe to be very limited, and it often at this stage disorders the patient's stomach, so that generally at the end of a few weeks, or even sooner, the surgeon has to abandon it without having done any good. Mr. Hunter sometimes gave opium every night in the fluid form, and cured a bad case with it alone.

It may be given in the form of solid extract or Battley's solution, and to the extent of about a grain for a dose of the former, and fifteen or twenty minims of the solution; when catarrh is present the ordinary tincture seems to answer better than either. But I need scarcely say that the quantity must vary according to the severity of the symptoms, the susceptibility of the patient to the action of the medicine, and other circumstances of the case. I have often doubled, trebled, or even quadrupled these doses,

<sup>1</sup> *L'Union Médicale*, Avril, 1853.

<sup>2</sup> *Bulletin gén. de Thérap.*, 1854, ii, p. 76.

and should have no hesitation in going beyond this if I thought that by so doing more effect on the emissions could be produced. As a vehicle, the brandy mixture of the pharmacopœia answers very well, or the dose can be given in compound tincture of cardamoms and peppermint water.

If the patient really suffer from constipation after using opium, a mild aperient will soon remove all cause for complaint. Some patients are afraid to take it lest they should turn opium-eaters, and never be able to do without it again ; a fear as chimerical as that a man who took a glass of wine must necessarily turn a drunkard.

I have seen opium in very moderate doses produce disagreeable effects in some persons, as for instance violent urticaria, accompanied by excessive itching and even peeling of the skin of the hands and feet ; in others a temporary, but almost total, loss of power to expel the contents of the bladder and rectum. It is also to be remembered that like all drugs which act as astringents, and at the same time subdue pain and excitement, it will, if given too freely, almost certainly in time bring on some torpor of the liver.

(*e.*) *Belladonna* has often been recommended in this complaint, and apparently on every occasion as a new idea.<sup>1</sup> M. Trousseau used<sup>2</sup> to give it internally, order it to be rubbed on the perinæum, and use suppositories of it at the same time. He thought it available chiefly in those cases where there was spasmodic action. I have had little experience of it, and that little has not been of a very satisfactory nature : dilatation of the pupil, giddiness, feeling of general disorder having followed the prolonged use of even very moderate doses. But indeed spermatorrhœa is not in general relieved by remedies which act speedily and severely, but by those which raise the standard of health, and remove complications, such as pain and sleeplessness, which may be distressing the patient, and the doses of which we can raise when it is thought fit to do so. Stephanides and Novatschek have used atropine internally with that unvarying success which seems to attend all new remedies.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Lancet* ; 1870, vol. ii, 769.

<sup>2</sup> *Rev. Méd. Chir.*, Mars. 1855.

<sup>3</sup> *Virchow und Hirsch's Jahresbericht* ; 1879, B. 2, S. 234.



(f.) *Hydrate of Chloral*.—This remedy has not answered well in my hands. First, in some persons, given even to a very moderate extent, such as ten to fifteen grains, it brings on a beating in the head, which one patient compared to a sense of thumping and another to the sound of a great hammer. One patient, who slept very well the first two nights under its influence, told me, that the next two it induced such frightful excitement and inability to remain lying down, that nothing would induce him to try it again. Besides, the hot salt taste of it is very repugnant to some persons. Secondly, I have never seen it do any, even the slightest, good in restraining the emissions, nor among all the patients who have come under my care and had been taking this drug, have I met with a single instance of benefit derived from the use of it ; and I need scarcely remind the reader that, under the influence of the craze which always sets in on the introduction of any new and powerful remedy, chloral was at one time prescribed for pretty well every case of which pain and excitement formed symptoms. I believe I may safely say that, at the time spoken of, I was scarcely ever consulted by a spermatorrhœa patient who had been under treatment at all and had not taken the hydrate. Deterred, then, by so many failures, I have long ceased to give chloral for the emissions themselves, and have restricted its use principally to cases of sleeplessness and excitement. Here, in conjunction with bromide of potassium and preceded by a dose of opium its acts very well.

It is but just to say that very different results have been noticed by other observers. In the *British Medical Journal* for 1871<sup>1</sup> there is an account by Dr. J. R. Bradbury of a case, in which seminal emissions occurred almost every night, being, to all appearance, perfectly cured in three days by as many fifteen-grain doses of the hydrate ; the patient remaining free from the disease, and being quite well at the end of eighteen days more, or three weeks in all. The same gentleman records a second case, also ending most satisfactorily.

(g.) *Bromide of Potassium*.—For many years I have used this salt as a sedative, and think it like chloral, with which I usually conjoin it, of service where there is much excitement and sleep-

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i, p, 363.

lessness, but only then. After numerous trials I have seen no reason to believe that it possesses any great power of curing the disease. Like all remedies which act in such a way, its use is apt to be followed in some persons by headache, and in others by a feeling of congestion on waking up in the morning, as if they had slept too heavily. To act at all it requires to be prescribed in doses of a scruple to half a drachm; it may be dissolved in camphor mixture, cinnamon water, or even simple water. M. Thielmann and Dr. Pfeiffer are said<sup>1</sup> to have been very successful with it. M. Binet has also recommended it strongly.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Soresina, Dr. Scarenzio, and others have procured their patients prompt relief with full doses of this salt. Scarenzio mentions<sup>3</sup> a case in which very severe emissions were checked in fifteen days by the use of bromide of potassium, carried to the extent of twelve grammes, a little more than a hundred and eighty-five grains, daily. The cases recorded in the Italian journals seem to be principally those in which the disorder was accompanied by very troublesome erections. Erichsen recommends it<sup>4</sup> in over quick emission. It must not be forgotten that serious symptoms have been known to result from the protracted use of this drug,<sup>5</sup> although the fact is denied by Dr. Broadbent, and I should therefore consider such a mode of giving it as scarcely justifiable unless accompanied by proper tonic and local treatment.

I look upon the constant resort to chloral and bromide in this affection as worse than the worst form of dram-drinking, and very little better than smoking opium. Two of the most hopeless cases of spermatorrhœa, I have seen, occurred in men who had for some two or three years previously given way to this habit, having, most unfortunately for themselves, derived in the beginning some slight advantage from the bromide. The first of the two, a man about forty, was a complete wreck, body and mind. He always carried with him a tolerably large bottle of bromide solution, first prescribed for him by a physician who had great faith in the

<sup>1</sup> *Medical Times*, 1858, vol. i, p. 351; 1859, vol. ii, p. 494.

<sup>2</sup> *Presse Belge*, 1858, No. 8. *Med. Times*, 1858, vol. i, p. 301.

<sup>3</sup> *Annali di Omodei*, 1863, 185, p. 342.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. citat.*, vol. ii, p. 789.

<sup>5</sup> *The Treatment of Epilepsy*. By John Chapman, M.D. *Med. Press and Circular*; April 3rd, 1867.



drug, and took it as the drunkard would take his drachm, two or three to five or six times a day, with the effect of becoming month after month more impotent, wretched and irresolute; indeed, the power of rousing himself to action had apparently quite deserted him. Step by step he had broken up his home, severed himself from his family and friends, and ruinously injured his professional income by constantly alleging his incapacity to take the work offered him. He knew that the bromide was doing all this, yet such mastery had the pernicious habit of half stupefying himself gained over him, that on my refusing to treat the case unless he would promise to give up the bromide, he could not prevail upon himself to relinquish a medicine which, he said, always soothed him. In the second case, that of a professional man who never went a day without taking the bromide, the patient at once admitted that he was a great deal worse than he had been two years before, when he began with the remedy; and according to his own account, was now in such a morbid state that he could not take even very small doses of any medicine likely to do him good without being made thoroughly ill. Yet the bromide, at the best, only yielded him what he called "an enforced calm," "a leaden feeling of easiness." Humanly speaking, I feel pretty sure both these men would have been cured if they had been treated with steel and injections, whereas daily intoxication would hardly have aggravated their symptoms more than medicine had done.

We must now turn to a class of medicines of a very different nature, but in their way as valuable as the others, and, indeed, in many cases indispensable. These are remedies which possess, among other qualities, that of setting the secretions right to a certain extent. I remember that in a course of lectures delivered at the College of Surgeons, the lecturer informed his hearers that he did not understand what was meant by setting the secretions right, and as no one, so far as I am aware, ever expressed an opinion on the statement, it is possibly now doing duty as a principle in surgery. I may therefore as well state that there are certain conditions in which the secretions are wrong—*e.g.* when the tongue is very coated or very dry; the urine unduly loaded with deposit, mucus, &c.; when the stools are pale or excessively



dark ; when they are extremely hard and dry, &c., then I believe the secretions of the tongue and buccal membrane, of the kidneys and bladder, of the liver and intestines, are out of order, and that there are certain medicines which set these conditions right, among which are aperients and diuretics.

APERIENTS.—Properly given, these remedies are often of great service in such complaints as spermatorrhœa, and should be administered whenever the bowels are torpid and the stools pasty or very dark-coloured. One of the best chances of success in treating disorders of a depressing, wasting kind, is to improve the nutrition of the frame, and this is often effected in a very marked manner by the use of purgatives. How they act it is difficult to say, but the fact is undoubted and is quite familiar to those who have often watched the operation of these remedies. They know well that those patients who have endeavoured to improve a feeble state of health, and rouse a flagging appetite by stimulating and tempting diet, do not get better unless plain food is substituted, and the bowels are steadily acted upon until the stools become of a bright yellow.

Many patients fear that the continual use of such medicines must be lowering to the health ; but this is a very groundless dread, as it is not requisite to use them to such an extent. Others fancy that if once they begin with purgatives they can never stop again, but must gradually carry up the dose as in opium-eating, an apprehension as unfounded as the others. In many forms of skin disease, I have to give acid preparations of iron for a long time, often for five or six months together ; in such cases an aperient must almost always be given in order to obviate the constipation which sooner or later comes on. Now although I have pursued this course of treatment for some years, I have never known an instance where anything like permanent costiveness ensued from so doing. After the patient has left off both medicines the bowels seem to come right without requiring anything to be done. In short, the surgeon may pursue the advice of the old scotch physician to Sir Astley Cooper, “to keep in the fear of the Lord and your bowels open,” with a clear conscience, especially if he take the precaution to give tonics and inculcate a plain diet. There is no need for drastic purga-

tives ; the requisite amount of action is easily obtained by such combinations as the pill recommended at page 80. As obstinate constipation is not common in spermatorrhœa, it is seldom requisite to prescribe more than one pill at bed-time, and it is not necessary to continue that for any length of time, though in my opinion a moderate use of these remedies is indispensable.

In an occasional case, where the tongue is coated, the breath foul, the stools continuing, even under the use of these remedies, pale, pasty, and adhesive, a small quantity of salts and senna, citrate of magnesia, or a little saline of any kind<sup>1</sup> may be usefully given the morning after the pill. We see this kind of thing occasionally when the patient has been worrying a good deal about his case, or has been living too fast. The latter, however, is rather a rare incident ; as a rule spermatorrhœa patients do not live too fast ; so far from it, they generally err on the opposite side.

*Strychnia.*—In the few old-standing cases of constipation which we occasionally encounter, the active principle of *nux-vomica* is an exceedingly useful remedy, especially when the disorder has attained such a height that mucous discharges occur after stool, or when the *fæces* can only be dislodged by enemata. It is, however, only necessary in such cases, and they are, as I have already intimated, by no means common ; nine times out of ten the confined state of the bowels may be overcome by the use of the aperients mentioned and the old-fashioned remedy of a glass of cold water in the morning, taken fasting. At one time I considered strychnia, a rare case or two excepted, a perfectly safe remedy in the usual doses, a twentieth to a sixteenth of a grain daily, particularly as I had myself taken it to the extent of a quarter of a grain a day without any permanent inconvenience ; and such in the great majority of cases I still consider it to be. But the exceptions just spoken of have now occurred on the whole

<sup>1</sup> As for instance the following :—

℞ Magnes. sulph. ʒvj.  
— carbon ʒiiss.  
Potass. nitratis, ʒj.  
Syrupi zingib., ʒiij.  
Spîr. chloroform, m. xlv.  
Aque menth. pip., ad ʒvj. ℥.

Coch. amp. ij. omni mane sumenda.

so often, even in strong healthy looking people, most unpleasant excitement having been set up by the thirtieth of a grain, that I have entirely ceased to prescribe such doses, restricting myself to the sixtieth of a grain or even less, and trusting rather to perseverance in the use of the remedy than to quantity. When constipation is present, and a pill seems preferable, very small doses of arsenic may be combined with the strychnia, and galbanum forms a good vehicle ; when, however, the patient is low, and complains of want of appetite and loss of relish for food, the liquor strychniæ in the acid and bitter mixture mentioned at page 76, is much more suitable, and seems to act very well indeed.

DIURETICS.—Mr. Curling says “that diuretics, or remedies which excite the action of the kidneys, as the nitrate of potass, are found to act as anaphrodisiacs.” This may be true of such remedies used in excess, but it does not hold good in respect to their proper employment. I have not recognized this effect from the nitrate of potass, although I have used it for several years, which, however, may be owing to the fact that I have always employed it in very moderate doses. M. Lallemand says that nearly all those who took squill, nitrate of potass, and digitalis, observed a marked exacerbation of the seminal discharges (*une augmentation notable des pertes séminales*), and that the nitrate proved injurious in every instance—an opinion founded upon forty cases, he says, some of which were certainly lamentable enough.<sup>1</sup>

But M. Lallemand has left us perfectly in the dark as to the dose, a most important point. In one case only can we arrive at any estimate, and here we are briefly informed that an ounce was taken in three days. Now, no one who has seen the irritability of the bladder and kidneys produced by nitrate of potass, or any strong diuretic salt, in gonorrhœa, will be much surprised to learn, that such needless over-dosing brought on a “notable augmentation” of the symptoms in spermatorrhœa. Properly employed, that is to say in moderate doses, and given in a suitable vehicle, the nitrate is a very useful medicine in those cases where the patient complains of a foul tongue and thirst, with nausea and

<sup>1</sup> *Des Pertes séminales involontaires* ; 1836-42, vol. iii, pp. 336, 337.



lassitude ; when the urethra is tender and smarts from the passage of the urine ; when the urine is turbid and the stomach disordered ; when the stools occasion smarting and heat at the anus, as also when he is harassed by a cough, and a good deal of mucus is expectorated ; when there is a low, inflamed, or irritated state of the gastro-intestinal tract, marked by dryness of the tongue, heat, and uneasiness in the stomach after food, and on rising in the morning, for these symptoms indicate a disordered state which is often instrumental in keeping up the spermatorrhœa. In all such cases I have frequently used the nitrate of potass with success, in doses of five to twenty grains, with compound tincture of camphor or hyoscyamus and a little red syrup ; occasionally adding the sulphate of magnesia or potass when an aperient was called for.<sup>1</sup>

*Copaiba.*—One surgeon having given a flattering account of the action of copaiba in this disease, especially after an injection of nitrate of silver, I was led to test its properties, and having begun with it I resolved to go on in the same path and try cubebs also. In both cases the results were extremely unsatisfactory. Many of the patients too, who applied to me, had experienced a relapse in the spermatorrhœa from a gonorrhœa, for the cure of which they had taken copaiba, without finding any relief to the emissions ; and as I have had ample proof that many cases in which it was prescribed for spermatorrhœa after cauterizing the urethra were not in the least influenced by either remedy, I quite gave up copaiba.

I have been requested to try the gray nicker-nut, the guilan-

<sup>1</sup> R Potassæ nitratis, ʒij.  
Tinct. camphoræ comp., ʒiij.  
Syrupi rhœad., ʒvj.  
Aquæ menth. virid. ad ʒvj. ℥

Coch. amp. ij. bis quotidie sumend.

R Potass. nitratis, ʒiss.  
—— sulphatis, ʒj.  
Tinct. hyoscyam., ʒij.  
—— cardam. c. ʒiij.

Aquæ menth. p. ad ʒvj. ℥

Coch. amp. duo bis quotidie sumend.

Four drachms of sulphate of magnesia may be substituted for the sulphate of potass.

dina bondicella I believe of Linnæus, in this complaint. After a long search I was not able to find that it had ever yet done good in a single instance; and as I have the strongest objection to experiments which offer no feasible prospect of success, I made none here. I should have thought that the yellow nicker-nut, guilandina bonduc, long used for gonorrhœa and convulsions, would be more likely to prove serviceable.

EXTERNAL APPLICATIONS: (*a.*) *Bathing*.—Foremost among these stands bathing of the genital organs with cold water every night before going to bed, which is often particularly serviceable when the patient is young and the attack recent. In mild cases, and in cold weather, it is generally sufficient to dash the water over the penis and testicles till they are well braced up, but in more severe forms of the disease further means are often requisite. One very necessary precaution is, I find, rarely taken. Patients bathe, they say, with cold water, but they simply pour it over the scrotum and penis; just as often as not this process is of no use at all. The patient should use the largest sponge he can get, or a large piece of flannel, soak it in the water, and squeeze it over *the upper part of the abdomen*, so that the water may flow in quite a torrent over this region, and from thence pour down upon the genital organs. After this the perinæum and rectum should be bathed till they feel quite chilled. The patient will very soon be conscious of a totally different result from this mode of using the application, to that which follows merely splashing a little cold water over the organs.

When the patient can procure them, or where expense is no object, sea-water, the solution of Tidman's sea-salt, or concentrated sea-water may generally be substituted with advantage for fresh water of every kind. Patients, however, in whom the scrotum is tender or predisposed to eczema, must always be careful to dry the surface very effectually after using salt-water, as however well some persons may bear its application, others less happily constituted may suffer a good deal from irritation thus induced. In hot or very close weather, and especially if the scrotum be very relaxed, the temperature of the water must be materially reduced, otherwise little benefit can be expected from the most prolonged use of it. Where ice can be procured, we



have a very simple means at hand. A lump, say half a pound in weight, should be put into about a quart or three pints of water. When it is just dissolved the fluid may be used. Freezing mixtures, such as those produced by the rapid solution of nitrate of potass and hydrochlorate of ammonia, are useful ; but as it is rather a costly process to abstract heat from a large quantity of water in this way, the patient should limit the amount of the latter to something like a pint and a half, and purchase the salts at some grocer's or wholesale house, as those which the chemists use are too fine and expensive for such work. The patient should put at least two or three ounces of each salt into two quarts of water, stir the whole briskly with his hand, and then place the water he is going to use, in a very thin vessel, in this solution, and as soon as he can ascertain by the touch that it is cold, bathe with it. If robust and indifferent to the smarting and tenderness it may occasion, I see no objection to his putting the salts direct into the fluid he is going to use for his local bath ; but it is not every patient who can stand this. When the back of the head feels hot it should also be sponged, as should the adjoining portion of the spine, or one of Chapman's ice-bags may be applied. Evaporating lotions to both regions suit some patients very well. I give below a formula<sup>1</sup> which I have used with benefit.<sup>2</sup>

And yet it is a fact that, even in quite young patients, cold bathing will, time after time, bring on an emission, and that scalding the perinæum, particularly when there is a good deal of irritation in the back part of the urethra, is often highly beneficial. How it happens that such opposite agencies act so much in the same way, I confess myself as unable to explain as I am to pronounce at the outset which case will be benefited by heat and which by cold. When the former is found desirable, a good method of applying it is to take a small, angular shaped sponge, which is put into very hot water, hooked out with a wire, and

<sup>1</sup> ℞ Spir. ætheris, ʒvj.

Liq. ammon. acet., ʒiiss.

Mist. camph. ad ʒviii. ℥ fiat lotio.

In very severe cases Moriggia uses the hunger cure, and preludes it with very free application of cold to the cerebro-spinal axis and head.



placed upon a cane-bottomed chair, beneath which a basin or slop-pail is placed; the patient then sits lightly down upon the sponge, which ought to be so hot, that he cannot bear the contact of it with the perinæum for more than a few seconds.

M. Trousseau, though he prefers the employment of cold when there is torpidity of the parts, recommends hot applications, such as bags of hot sand to the perinæum, when the excitability is augmented. He also resorts to hot hip-baths. For the cases mentioned above as benefited by warmth, such means are valuable, but I would restrict their use to these complications; and I believe that the influence of either heat or cold bathing over emissions is more limited than many persons suppose.

With regard to the cold hip-bath I have totally lost faith in it. I have known patients carry the use of it to such an absurd extent, that I fancy my readers would scarcely credit the accounts I have heard, without gaining any benefit whatever. Indeed I have sometimes wondered that serious consequences had not ensued. The plunge-bath, especially when it can be procured cold, as at the old roman bath near the Strand, when the patient has not to walk too far either before or after it, and when he feels braced and stronger for the use of it, is a better remedy. I need scarcely say that a dip in the sea, particularly in early summer before the great heats have set in, or in autumn when the heat is declining, is preferable to any plunge-bath, but with the same reservations. When languor, coldness, headache, giddiness, a bluish tinge of the complexion, a feeling of not being well, or a sensation of sinking follow, it is likely to do far more harm than good. Swimming should never be prolonged to such an extent as to bring on fatigue, pallor, and chilliness. The reader must remember that it is an exhausting exercise, and that anything like exhaustion will more than counteract the good effects of the bathing. Indeed, according to my experience, cold bathing in the morning, however suitable for hygienic purposes, and for mild and recent cases of spermatorrhœa, often exercises, when the disease has reached an advanced stage, less control than is expected from it. Above all things I wish to caution the reader not to trust it too far at this period. As a means of preventing

the discharges it is not unfrequently only of service when employed just before going to bed, and even at that hour may be useless or injurious should there be great local irritation. In winter the morning cold bath is, as a rule, hurtful, especially for delicate persons, who do much better on a hot bath.

(b.) *Sleeping Cool.*—Sleeping with the organs cool possesses greater control over emissions than almost any form of bathing; indeed I believe *there is a degree of cold at which they never take place.* Whether the patient can and will support it is another thing. I cannot, however, too strongly insist on the necessity for his trying to do so. In my opinion he ought to lie, winter and summer, with the window open, and the parts as lightly covered as possible. In severe cases I often advise the patient to sleep on the floor. With a view of avoiding cold, he may wrap up the rest of the body, neck, and head, as warmly as he likes. Wearing an old pair of trousers with the front part cut away, and sleeping outside the bed-clothes, will often prevent an emission. Too great a weight of bed-clothes is particularly injurious, and however strange it may seem, it is quite certain that many persons, who escape tolerably well during the great heats of summer, begin to suffer again so soon as ever thick blankets are laid upon the bed, *although they are not so hot as they were in the summer months.* Again, the class of patients, suffering from spermatorrhœa, seen at hospitals, is almost exclusively composed of artisans who work, and only too often sleep, in warm rooms; while tramps, who are exposed to great inclemency, seldom complain of this disorder. The practice of wearing a totally unnecessary amount of clothing, especially in the shape of that rubbish which is known by the inappropriate name of under linen, and of sitting in hot rooms with door and window closed, if not so potent for mischief as sleeping too warm, still can do and does no good. Dr. Beard looks upon<sup>1</sup> the increased sensitiveness to cold seen in the brain-working classes of America as evidence of the growing power of nervousness; but I should be inclined to say that it is the baneful practice of over-heating both the body and the house it dwells in which generates the nervousness.

(c.) *Pressure.*—One horrible remedy, very justly condemned

<sup>1</sup> *American Nervousness: Its Philosophy and Treatment*; p. 2.

by Lallemand, used at one time to be revived every three or four years after he published his treatise. It consisted of an expensive instrument which, whatever form it might assume, was constructed for the purpose of applying pressure to the urethra, in order to prevent the escape of the semen, which of course would flow back into the bladder. Some cases of very severe suffering induced by this abominable machine came under my care. One patient brought me a large disk of hard wood, which was pressed into the perinæum by means of a T bandage, the transverse belt going round the waist; the use of this implement of torture had materially increased the emissions. Another described to me a complicated machine for securing pressure on the lower part of the urethra, which the surgeon who devised it called a "jugum," and which, though more elaborate than the other, proved in respect to the chief point only on a par with it, both of them being utterly useless. I believe however most of these things have now gone out of fashion.

M. Trousseau uses a stem pessary which may compress the ejaculatory ducts, though I have failed to see that it does so. The foot is fixed to the stalk supporting the body, in such a way that it forms at angle of  $75^{\circ}$  which is turned towards the perinæum, and one of  $125^{\circ}$  which goes towards the coccyx. This is oiled, introduced up the rectum, and worn almost constantly. The first patient on whom he employed this instrument was suffering from "absolute impotence," as well as involuntary emissions; the dates are slightly doubtful, but as I read M. Trousseau's narrative, the patient was entirely cured in twenty-nine days.<sup>1</sup> Since then he has often seen very rebellious cases yield in a few days (!) to the use of this instrument.<sup>2</sup>

Along with this, however, M. Trousseau cups over the loins, applies over the same part lotions of tincture of iodine, and a thick woollen stuff impregnated with embrocations of essence of turpentine, over which a very hot iron is passed,<sup>3</sup> nor does he hesitate, in suitable cases, to employ moxas and flying cauteries. In one case forcible dilatation of the anus produced excellent results.

<sup>1</sup> *Op. citat.*, vol. iii, p. 470.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 472.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 468.



Early in the summer of 1873, a gentleman, who had some little time previously gone to Paris in order to consult M. Trousseau, placed himself under my care. He had used the stem pessary, which he brought with him, and which he said had done him a great deal of good. He had been induced to try it from finding that he could not take any of the medicines usually recommended for emissions. The instrument, which was very much like the rectum pessary used for piles, except that the globe of it was larger, was evidently made of gilt metal. The price of it, he said, was forty-five francs.

I resolved to give the instrument a fair trial. I had at that time some very rebellious cases under my care, and of these I selected five. The pessaries used were exactly of the same shape as that of M. Trousseau, but were made of the same material as bougies; they were however nearly as smooth and hard as metal. Not one of the patients benefited by the use of them. One of them complained severely of the pain occasioned by the instrument, and a smaller one was tried, but it exerted equally little control over the discharges. One gentleman, a surgeon, was obliged to have this instrument altered, as the foot of it pressed too hard upon the perinæum, and this was also the case with the patient who first recommended it to me. This difficulty was got over by doing away with the external slip or foot, and substituting a strip of silk cord passed lengthwise through the pessary; but by this time the successive failures had quite disheartened me, and M. Trousseau's patient brought matters to a climax by saying, of his own accord, that he was quite satisfied that the treatment which I had recommended him (principally injections) had been of far more service; thus out of six cases only one could be said to have benefited by the pessary, and that one by his own account but very slightly.

(d.) *The urethral Ring.*—This is to my thinking a much safer and better remedy. One kind, "the four-pointed," consists simply of a leather ring armed with points, and so fitted with the points turned inwards on the penis as to produce no uneasiness till erection comes on, when the patient, roused by the pricking, can jump out of bed and thus arrest an impending emission. However sharp these points may be filed they scarcely

ever pierce the skin, as the merest approach to puncture awakens the sleeper. Now and then an over-tired patient will fall asleep, and not feel that his skin is being punctured till he is awakened by an emission, but I have never known any troublesome consequences follow this.



FOUR-POINTED URETHRAL RING.

The engraving represents the ring as it is tied on the penis, the skin of which the points should all but touch. Should they be too sharp the patient can easily file the tips down.

The reader must have seen the effects of this little instrument in order to appreciate its value. It is scarcely overrating the control it exerts over some forms of spermatorrhoea to say that a resolute patient can, with its assistance, almost set the disorder at defiance. The first case I treated with it was one of the worst I ever saw. The patient, a remarkably strong-built man, assured me that for nearly eighteen months he had never passed a night without an emission, and that he was driven nearly mad with them. He looked the very picture of despondency, called nearly every day, though I told him that such a proceeding was far more likely to aggravate the excitement, and generally wrote a long letter after each visit, describing his symptoms, and begging of me to investigate the case. He complained bitterly of an alarming and intolerable feeling in the back of his head, as if there were a heavy weight inside the skull, and a sense of soreness like that which would have arisen from hitting it with a hammer. Ice to the occiput, mild and brisk aperients, digitalin, &c., were prescribed, but all failed to give any relief. I therefore resolved



to try the ring, with the power of which I was then scarcely acquainted. It acted, however, almost like a charm; the emissions yielded with extraordinary rapidity, and at the expiration of quite seven or eight years had never returned. Since then I have employed it in hundreds of cases, and can safely say, that, properly used, it has rarely disappointed me, that is to say in actively assisting the operation of other remedies.

But it must be properly used. There must be no mistake about this. Unless the patient is sufficiently resolute to submit to having his rest broken, any measure of this kind will be inoperative. So soon as ever the pricking awakens him he should rise, untie the tape, bathe the organs with cold water till the erection subsides, and replace the ring. This is not very pleasant work, especially when the weather is cold, or the patient wearied or out of sorts, but it is very efficacious, and that is of a great deal more consequence. If the patient find that he begins to untie the ring in his sleep, he should substitute for the tapes a hook and eye, secured by a small padlock. The key should be tied to a piece of bright coloured ribbon, with a view to its being easily found when wanted; and it should, after locking on the ring, be placed just out of reach, so that the patient must get up to open the padlock. Should the patient be taking camphor, a dose once or twice in the night, when he is roused in this way, is often serviceable.

Some persons are of such an irritable temperament, so easily fidgeted, to use a common but expressive word, that they cannot bear this instrument. They have a constant tendency to erections when in bed, and they complain that the pricking keeps them awake all night through. In these cases the toothed ring answers better.<sup>1</sup> It is made of very thin watch-spring covered with silk, and is so constructed, that while the penis is in a quiescent state, the points (A) lie outside B and do not come in contact with the skin; but so soon as a certain degree of erection occurs, it opens the ring out, and the teeth are brought so thoroughly to bear upon the nearest point of the skin, as shown in the engraving,

<sup>1</sup> Both these rings can be had of Messrs. F. Walters & Co., 29, Moorgate Street.



and speedily produce such a pricking as to warn the patient of his danger.



TOOTHED URETHRAL RING.

The reader is however to understand that, though the ring will prevent emissions, it will in many cases not check the disposition to them ; that it does not in any way cure the morbid state of the urethra, and that merely stopping the discharges will often not restore the strength, local or general. To be thoroughly efficient, the use of such an instrument must be conjoined with that of tonics, injections, &c.

Patients are often startled to find that they have an emission even with the ring on. This may possibly depend on seminal plethora, or the beginning of that loss of sensation which is apt to set in when the disorder has been running on for a considerable time ; however, so far from constituting any objection to the use of the ring, such an occurrence is one of the very reasons why it should be worn, as it gives unmistakeable notice that a state of matters is drawing on which admits of no delay.

A patient who had suffered martyrdom from this affection, and who had tried both kinds of rings without obtaining much relief, as the emissions continued to occur either without any warning, or so suddenly that he was unable to avert them by rising, informed me that he had used the following method with great benefit. He had a very fine ring made of thin steel, and fitting to the circumference of the penis at the part where it was applied ; the points were so arranged as to be just clear of the skin when the organ was in a state of quiescence. The ring, however, instead of being worn on the body of the penis, was worn

behind the glans and underneath the foreskin. Mr. Walters has invented a ring which he considers in some respects superior to both the others. It consists of a circle of german silver, with the edges turned at right angles and cut in projecting teeth. Attached to the inside of this is a light circular steel-spring ring, smaller in size than those just described, by means of which the instrument is kept in position. A very slight enlargement of the penis opens the steel ring, thus bringing the skin into contact with the teeth.

One writer has condemned the use of this ring as unscientific. I should scarcely have thought that a rational being would have made use of such an argument, and I should not have noticed it if it had not afforded me an opportunity of answering other objections and other questions. I confess, therefore, once for all, that I both use—and recommend others to use—remedies of which I cannot in any way explain the action. When I have, to the best of my judgment, thoroughly tested a medicine or an instrument, I employ it without any regard to theories; and if a means of preventing human suffering is to be rejected because it is unscientific, then I say, quite deliberately, that the sooner science is done away with and empiricism adopted in its stead, the better for the patients. The same writer has so completely succeeded in confusing himself, that his readers would imagine I had recommended this ring for preventing masturbation. I never did anything of the kind. It would be useless for such an object.

The Cavaliere Giuseppe Tenderini was kind enough to send me a pamphlet<sup>1</sup> printed from a paper read, April 7th, 1871, before the Medico-physical Society of Florence, containing an account of an instrument (the Cintolo Avvisatore), devised for the same purpose, made of leather and fastening with a button, which appears to have succeeded very well in his hands. Professor Ferdinando Zannetti remarked at the meeting that the use of such instruments had long been known; but, as the author observed, and he spoke from trials, these carried out the idea very rudely and imperfectly; they fastened with a clasp like a bracelet; the material of which they were formed was rigid; they gave unnecessary pain and were difficult to loosen, so that

<sup>1</sup> *Di un semplice Apparecchio per impedire le Perdite seminali involontarie.*  
Noto del Dott. Gius. Tenderini.



patients got alarmed at the prospect of not being able to free themselves from such an incumbrance; objections which the author of the paper seems to have overcome in the ring which he has invented. As the pamphlet is not accompanied by any engravings, I am unable to say whether Cavaliere Tenderini's ring is superior to those I have recommended.

(c.) *The electric Alarum.*—But the most ingenious instrument of this kind that I have seen is the electrical apparatus figured in the annexed engraving, the invention of the same gentleman (for it is no discovery of mine) who devised the toothed urethral ring, and who had himself been suffering from spermatorrhœa. The principle of it is that a ring placed on the penis is so made, that when expanded by erection it completes an electric circuit, and so rings a small alarum bell placed under the sleeper's pillow, which speedily rouses him, however deep his slumbers may be. I own that when the idea was first mentioned to me I felt incredulous. It seemed impracticable that an erection could be made to sound the watchword of alarm; but when the patient explained the working model he had constructed, I saw at once that the instrument might be made a means of benefit; I am afraid, however, that the cost (five pounds) will always deter the majority of patients from employing it.

The instrument consists of a ring (A), which is hinged for the purpose of keeping the circuit open when the organ is quiescent. Upon the ring is a flat plate of ivory (a), furnished with a bolt (b), which, upon erection, is pushed backwards so as to complete the circuit at this point. With the ring and bolt are connected two insulated wires (B, B), which convey the current to two binding screws (C1, C2). Of these C1 is in communication with one of two metal slips placed *below* the frame on which the screws rest. C2 communicates with the back spring of the break (D), and thus through the wires surrounding the electro-magnet (E), by means of a second slip of metal, with the other element of the battery. The battery is, as the reader will infer, placed below the frame, and consists of a small square carbon trough, within which is a square zinc plate lying beneath another carbon plate of the same size. Electricity is disengaged by the agency of sulphate of mercury. From the zinc plate a pin passes through the carbon plate,



and comes in contact with one of the metal slips mentioned above; the other metal slip simply presses on the carbon plate to make contact. On the circuit being completed by the pushing back of the bolt (*b*), the hammer (*F*) strikes the bell (*G*). But so soon as this takes place the current is broken at the point (*D*), and in consequence the hammer recedes. As it does so it re-establishes the circuit, and as a result the hammer is again propelled against the bell. Thus the ringing continues so long as the ring remains on.



The ring can be widened at will by letting out a pin, and the machine is so arranged that the box containing the electric bell can be placed under the pillow of the sleeper. The note, too, given out by the bell may be made very low, or loud and shrill, according to the patient's pleasure.

So far as I know this apparatus has only been tried by five persons. The first was the inventor himself; he, I believe, derived great benefit from it. The second patient really did not require it, and speedily abandoned its use. The third patient, a

surgeon, tried it thoroughly. The first obstacle he encountered was that the bell, shrill as its note is, failed to awaken him. He then arranged for one of his relatives, who however knew nothing of what was the matter with him or why the alarum was used, to sit up in his room at night and rouse him so soon as ever the bell began to ring; he was also called twice during the night whether it rang or not. This gentleman's experience was that the alarum was really of use. The emissions were to some extent warded off, and his health improved in the interval, though there had been a change for the better in both before he had begun with the alarum. It sometimes failed to awaken him, even when an emission took place. On one occasion he computed, from the observations of the attendant and himself, that there was only an interval of perhaps twenty to thirty seconds from the beginning of the erection to that of the emission, or else the erection must have continued to increase after the emission had begun, which seemed to him impossible, and at that time seemed doubtful to me, though I have since then seen good reason to believe that such a thing occasionally happens. In practice he found that the cords twisted and broke, however careful he was, and that a three-strand silver wire answered better; he also noticed that the best cloth for the purpose is flannel which has been washed a good deal so as to thicken it,—this retains the mercury without letting a quantity of water get between the plate and the cloth, as happened with the first cloth used; it should be well wetted, but not sufficient to let much escape. The zinc plate must be scraped every day, as rubbing only coats it with mercury. The next patient also reported that the battery demanded a good deal of time and trouble, and that the wires got kinked and cracked; that he had sometimes been aroused as much as six or seven times in two hours by the constant ringing; that unless the ring was very delicately adjusted, which was another term for perpetual disturbance of his sleep, it acted no better than the spiked ring; and finally that no one could bear always being robbed of sleep. The fifth patient soon got tired of the alarum.

Two years after the last edition of this work, containing a full account of the alarum, appeared, M. Minière described<sup>1</sup> one

<sup>1</sup> *Bulletin général de Théraputique*; 1877, p. 500.

essentially the same in principle, and M. Verneuil communicated<sup>1</sup> the particulars of a case treated by means of this apparatus. The case had resisted all ordinary modes of treatment for fourteen years, and would, according to M. Verneuil, have ended in imbecility and death had it gone on; it was, however, perfectly cured by means of the alarum. M. Tillaux supplements<sup>2</sup> this with the history of a most severe case treated in the same way. The emissions occurred almost every night and sometimes twice or thrice in a night, yet the alarum soon effected such an alteration that there was an arrest of them for quite three weeks. The story, however, breaks off abruptly, and is too incomplete for the purposes of evidence.

In some persons in whom an unfortunate tendency to emissions during sleep is strongly developed by lying on the back or the face, it is necessary to employ mechanical means, so as to make it impossible for them to rest in either position. A very simple way of ensuring this is to have two pieces of boxwood, carved with three or four projections sharp enough to cause considerable uneasiness when pressed against the skin, fixed, with the projections turned inwards, to the inside of the belt of a suspensory bandage, one facing the spine and the other the linea alba. No patient, however sleepy and wearied he may be, can long bear the discomfort occasioned by this implement. For those who have contracted the baneful habit of masturbation when half-asleep and half-awake, often men who would shrink with horror from the idea when in full possession of their senses, Mr. Walters has, at my suggestion, constructed a light wire cage, which the patient can fasten on with a small padlock. As in order to remove it he must rise to get at the key, he has time to become aware of what he is going to do. Blistering the penis with some strong ointment, such as that of the red iodide of mercury, has been recommended in these cases, and I have myself had recourse to it; but it is a clumsy and barbarous method compared to the cage: it makes the patient sore, lame, and uncomfortable in the daytime, and as it cannot be continued for an

<sup>1</sup> *Bulletins et Memoires de la Société de Chirurgie de Paris*; 1877, p. 298.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 535.



indefinite period, generally has to be given up before he is effectively weaned from his destructive habits.

(*f.*) *Blistering*.—In some cases a blister is one of the most useful means of cure we possess. Notwithstanding the strong opinion M. Lallemand has pronounced on the subject, I have no hesitation in asserting, even in opposition to him, after the numerous trials I have given it, that if some proper medium, as blistering tissue, be used, no strangury, or "*exaspération effrayante*" of spermatorrhœa, however severe the case may be, need ever be feared.

I attach equally little weight to the more modern objections. As I have now employed blisters for many years in gleet and spermatorrhœa, I may be allowed to speak somewhat decidedly. The only ill effect I have ever seen from them was occasionally a small number of boils, and this may generally be averted by dressing the blistered surface with cotton-wool, instead of any ointments. Some patients have voluntarily carried the practice of blistering to an extent that would hardly be credited. One gentleman, who had for years been tormented by irritable bladder and gleet, of his own accord blistered the penis and perinæum together upwards of twenty times, with the best results. He had been for nearly a year and a half a perfect victim to these symptoms. His bladder was so irritable, that often the mere act of stooping sufficed to make it expel part of its contents. He told me that he durst not enter society, or go to any place which he could not leave when he liked. The irritability of the bladder in this case appeared to be simply an extension of this action from the membranous part of the urethra, which at last, under the action of the blistering, threw off a long narrow strip of gray tenacious mucus, quite hard, and looking like a slough. Another, still more resolute, under the direction of a surgeon in Ireland, applied thirty, with the effect of reducing a most obstinate vesicular gleet to a slight and occasional escape of mucus. A third carried blistering quite as far as in the second case; and I know of many instances in which patients have resorted twelve or fourteen times to this means.

Perhaps no remedy produces such a deep-seated and gratifying feeling of strength and release from that indefinable sense of con-

straint and irritation in the organs, of which these patients often complain, as a blister. Moreover, if the following directions be literally carried out the inconvenience is made very endurable.

A piece of paper is fitted on the penis, and cut till it exactly covers it from the root to within half an inch of the mouth of the urethra. This is then laid down on the blistering tissue, which is cut out by it, wrapped round the penis with the greasy side next the skin, and fastened with thread, or two rings of vulcanized india-rubber cut very thin with scissors. The patient should keep it on till a blister rises, and remain perfectly quiet during the time it is on, lest any motion bring the blister against the scrotum and vesicate the skin; but he must not apply it on going to bed, as he will most likely fall asleep and not awake until the penis is one mass of vesications,—a state productive of an unnecessary amount of suffering.

In the milder cases, or where the skin is tender, an hour or an hour and a half will be sufficient. The blister is then removed, and if there are any vesicated spots they are punctured and covered with a layer of cotton-wool, bound over these with a small piece of linen kept on by a thread, or the rings spoken of above.

When a severer case renders a more energetic employment of the remedy necessary, it must be kept on two to four hours until free vesication is produced; a white-bread poultice or two may then be applied, and afterwards, if there be a good deal of smarting, benzoated zinc or white elder ointment spread on linen. It is, however, better to do without ointments if possible. Any patient may make a poultice for this purpose, by putting the inside of a french roll into a slop-basin and pouring a little boiling water over it; the water is drained off at the lapse of two or three minutes, and a little unsalted butter or lard added; an old linen handkerchief will serve to put it in. To protect the penis from friction, a T-bandage, with a linen bag sewn into the part which receives the penis, or a handkerchief carried round the waist and dipping in front so as to hold the penis and keep it up against the abdomen, is necessary.

A very good method of blistering the perinæum is to apply Bullin's blistering fluid, or the liquor epispasticus of the brit

pharmacopœia (which, however, I believe to be an inferior preparation, though of course more orthodox), by means of a camel's-hair pencil.<sup>1</sup> It should be laid on with a rather dry brush, so that none of the fluid trickles down and excoriates the thighs or scrotum, and a space the size of the palm of the hand should be painted over with it. The patient should hold the scrotum well up and brush the whole surface between it and the anus. He then waits quite ten minutes, and, should there be no sign of heat or pain, repeats the process; usually this is enough, but three or even four applications may be required. If on the contrary he feel the part beginning to tingle, he has done enough. This process soon raises a blister, which is to be dressed like the others, but, of course, only a T-bandage can be used. This may be made by attaching a handkerchief to the back of the belt of a suspensory bandage (or another handkerchief tied round the waist), bringing it up between the thighs, and fastening it to the belt in front. A pad, consisting of a pair of socks rolled up, or something of about the same bulk, is then fastened to the part next the blistered surface, and on this is laid the lint with the ointment, which it serves to retain in its place; or Walters's mocmain bandage, with triangular pad, made expressly for these cases, can be used. The patient, unless of an inventive turn of mind, is apt to fail with his first essay, but he soon learns to dress a blister deftly enough.

DIRECT APPLICATIONS :—(a.) *Cauterizing the Urethra.*—Although the application of nitrate of silver to the urethra is a perfectly safe and often a most valuable remedy if suitably used, and particularly when resorted to in order to aid other treatment, yet its employment, by means of M. Lallemand's instrument, as a specific, and there can be no doubt that it has been and still is so used in the vast majority of cases, was never likely to do anything but mischief. It was at one time evidently considered almost if not quite infallible. I suppose, however, its pretensions in that way have gone the same road as those of so many specifics. Those who are themselves infallible, who set down as cured every patient that does not return with an unfavourable account of the

<sup>1</sup> Some persons have the skin of the penis so tough that it is necessary to use it for this part also.



results of the operation, and who refuse to hear the unfavourable account when the patient comes with it, may give a different verdict; but a dispassionate examination will, I think, quite confirm what I have often said—namely, that under any circumstances the nitrate often fails.

It might be said that I am prejudiced against cauterizing, and cannot give a fair opinion, as I never use it uncombined; but I have been consulted in quite a sufficient number of cases where the nitrate alone had been employed by other surgeons without doing any good, to satisfy me that this is a very frequent result. Of course I was not consulted by those who had been cured.

However, many practitioners continue to have great faith in it. Mr. Solly, for instance, who applies it very gently and merely over the openings of the ejaculatory tubes, says<sup>1</sup> that it will, in conjunction with iron, quinine, and zinc, effect a cure “even in cases where the testicles have shrunk to little more than the thickness of a penny piece and the varicose veins resemble a bag of worms.”

Of its safety there can be no doubt when it is properly employed. Lallemand used it for twenty years, and even cauterized the lower part of the bladder, without any untoward result. Mr. Curling says, “In no instance has any harm resulted from the application of the caustic;” and Mr. Phillips, in one of his answers to me, says it never produced injurious results in his hands, though his experience extends over many hundred cases.

We might suppose that some part of this was owing to the excellent surgery of those who employed it. M. Lallemand did not allow the caustic to remain an instant longer in contact than was absolutely necessary. “I cannot,” he says, “protest too strongly against those who give a fixed period (*une durée quelconque*) for the action of the caustic, and measure it off by the watch. *Even to look at the dial takes too long a time;*” and Mr. Curling attributes the absence of severe symptoms, in the cases where he has used it, to his having applied it still more gently. But Mr. Phillips, though he has seen some discomfort caused by it, has rarely heard of any complaint on the patient's part; the pain on passing urine is “very bearable,” although he uses the

<sup>1</sup> *Lancet*, 1858, vol. i, p. 134.

caustic *very freely*. "I have never applied," he says, "too much caustic, but I have more than once failed by using too little." Had any severe symptoms occurred, Mr. Phillips would, we may rest assured, neither have overlooked nor suppressed the mention of them. All that is left us is frankly to admit that in his cases no harm resulted from the application of the caustic. M. Lallemand, however, has seen severe retention of the urine, hæmorrhage, and intense pains, which only yielded after a long time and it seems that stricture has also followed. Dr. Humphry speaks of a good deal of irritation, pain, with frequent bloody micturition, and some discharge following the operation, with perhaps seminal emissions at night. Sir Henry Thompson<sup>1</sup> found that caustic, however carefully used, produced hæmorrhage, retention, or inflammation, unless absolute rest was enforced. Dr. Golding Bird says<sup>2</sup> he has seen most disastrous results from over free application of the nitrate, and that in one case the operation brought on cystitis and thus placed the patient's life in danger. Mr. Gascoyen has known<sup>3</sup> two persons die from the effects of the *porte caustique*; and Dr. Durkee says<sup>4</sup> that "severe retention of urine, hæmorrhage, and the most excruciating agony, and even stricture have been produced by the *porte caustique*." A surgeon, who had been cauterized by a gentleman standing deservedly high in professional estimation, told me that the pain lasted quite three months.

My own experience quite confirms all this. However carefully it may be employed, hæmorrhage and excessive pain on making water will sometimes follow. Patients have told me that the agony of attempting to pass water, after this operation had been performed by very experienced surgeons, was so great that they were compelled to desist. In many cases it has been found necessary to give powerful sedatives or inject almond oil along the urethra, before the patient could attempt to empty the bladder. Shiverings, in some cases of such severity as to confine the patient to his bed, have also ensued. Generally, however, this result has only been noticed in cold snowy weather. Retention of urine I have not seen after the operation, unless stricture was

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 1852, vol. i, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> *On Urinary Deposits*; 1857, p. 379.

<sup>3</sup> *British Medical Journal*: 1872, vol. i, p. 96.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. citat.*, p. 136.



also present, when I have witnessed it, and also relieved it by the simple process of passing a gum-elastic bougie.

On the whole I can only conclude that in many cases it will, if trusted to alone, prove inert when applied so mildly as to cause no pain, and that when used to such an extent as to produce a curative effect, a certain amount of suffering must be looked for. I am well aware that this view is totally opposed not only to the opinions, but also the experience, of many able surgeons; that the treatment by caustic was matured and tested in a most extensive practice for many years; that Lallemand, with unusual success, lived to see his treatment universally adopted as the great panacea for the disease. Still I cannot help thinking that it is a by-path, and that under the shadow of a great name much has been said that will hardly stand the test of criticism.

Nor is this a judgment formed solely upon my own experience. Several surgeons have told me that they had been consulted by so many patients who had been cauterized in vain, and that they had themselves employed the caustic with so little result, that they had almost given up using it. Now these were not patients who had been handled by bunglers in the art—by men who had employed the caustic unskillfully and rashly; on the contrary, they had been under the care of first-class surgeons in this specialty. Some of them, after having bid their surgeons good-bye, the cure being in the opinion of both complete, had endured the mortification of seeing the worst symptoms return.

Beyond all question, some part of this may be attributed to the total want of a systematic course of treatment by medicine; for even granting the value of caustic in most instances, it is far better, in order not to lose any part of its effect, first of all to set right, as far as we can, any derangements in the other functions, and this can only be done by carrying out a fixed plan of treatment.

I have long given up Lallemand's instrument, convinced by ample experience that it is, to the best of my judgment, inferior to my own, which I have now long used without ever seeing much in the way of severe symptoms follow. It consists, as seen in the engraving, of a platinum or silver slightly-curved canula (A),

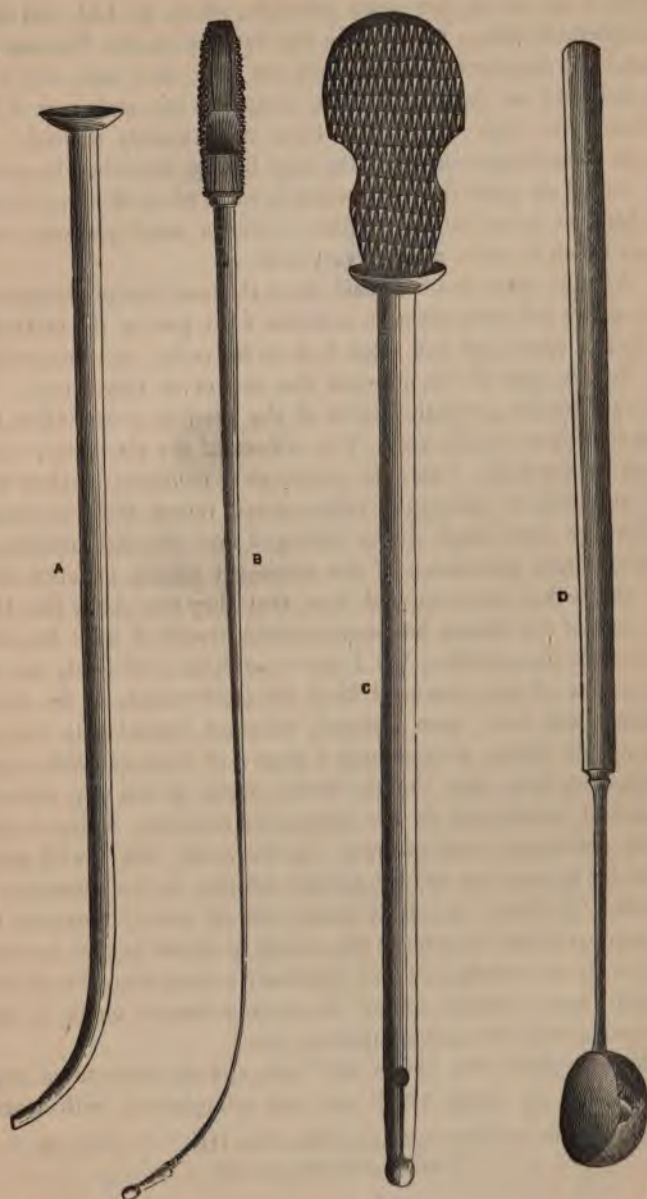


and a stilet (B). It is about the length of an ordinary catheter, and in gauge about midway between numbers 9 and 10. For patients suffering under a certain amount of stricture, or affected with congenital narrowness of the opening of this canal, I employ an instrument not more than number 7 gauge. The instrument, closed, as in the drawing of the smaller instrument (C)<sup>1</sup> used when there is stricture of the anterior part of the urethra, is well oiled, and then passed down to the prostatic portion of the urethra, or to any part that is extremely tender, and the stilet being withdrawn, a small flexible bougie, armed by dipping the tip into caustic fused in the ladle (D), is introduced by the canula and drawn lightly over the urethra for an inch or two. It is then drawn back within the canula, so that, in removing it, the anterior part of the urethra is not cauterized. By this means only a very small amount of caustic is applied, every part is touched with which it is necessary that the nitrate should come in contact, while the risk of giving excessive pain, and the disagreeable sensation produced by the rotation of Lallemand's instrument, are avoided. It has also the advantage that the instrument cannot be grasped by an irritable urethra and held till all the caustic is dissolved out, as occurred once to me. A still more unpleasant circumstance happened in the hands of Dr. Humphry. The part carrying the caustic gave way when he was cauterizing a gentleman, leaving the end of the instrument and the caustic in the patient's prostate. Fortunately for the patient the loose piece of instrument was voided with the urine on the following day, and though some unnecessary suffering was occasioned, no ill effects followed.<sup>2</sup>

There is nothing new under the sun ! Several years since Mr. Wade exhibited at the Medical Society of London an instrument of the same construction, and three years prior Mr. J. Z. Laurence introduced to the same Society a similar instrument. In 1854, a considerable time before either of these events, some months after I had, as I thought, perfected my caustic holder, a friend

<sup>1</sup> In the engravings the larger instrument is reduced one-half, and the smaller one a fourth. The drawing of the ladle is of the actual size. The instruments can be procured from Messrs. F. Walters & Co., Moorgate Street.

<sup>2</sup> *Holmes's System of Surgery*, vol. iv, p. 605.



showed me one on the same principle, which he had had for a considerable time. On looking into Hunter on the Venereal,<sup>1</sup> I found the instrument again; and not long after met with it in an old work on the same subject, written in the early part of last century, the title of which I have unfortunately mislaid. In cases complicated with gleet the cage bougie, described in a work by myself on gonorrhœa,<sup>2</sup> in which a small piece of nitrate is embedded in cacao butter, confined within a small platinum cage from which it oozes, answers very well.

After so much has been said about the best kind of instrument, the reader will naturally seek to know what part of the urethra it is to act upon, and how often it is to be called into requisition. To the first part of the question the answer is very simple. In my opinion the prostatic region of the urethra is essentially the part that must be attacked. The orifices of the ejaculatory ducts must be reached. There is pathological evidence to show that the mischief is principally concentrated round their openings, which are sometimes in an enlarged and abraded condition.<sup>3</sup> The continual recurrence of the statement among patients, after the nitrate has been applied here, that they now really feel that the seat of the disease has been reached, would of itself be good ground for the practice; but I can in addition confidently turn to the results of the treatment itself for confirmation of the view. Patients who have been injected, blistered, treated with tonics, and strictly dieted, without such a degree of improvement as was anticipated, have, after the use of the caustic in this way, noticed a marked subsidence in the number of emissions within a few weeks, sometimes even at once. At the same time I wish most distinctly to warn the reader against trusting to the nitrate as a specific. It is not so. It is simply one of several measures to be employed, and the excuse for calling in its aid is that spermatorrhœa is so complicated and refractory a complaint, that in my opinion every avenue against its encroachments ought to be barricaded with the most scrupulous care.

Most probably the reader will have already conjectured that this applies to cases which are not complicated with gleet,

<sup>1</sup> *A Treatise on Venereal Disease*; 1810, Plate III.

<sup>2</sup> Page 248.

<sup>3</sup> Curling, *Op. citat.*, p. 457.



stricture, tender patches in the urethra, &c., and it is so. For such complications the application of the nitrate to the affected spot may or not be required ; and in speaking of the restriction of it to the prostate, I am assuming either that such symptoms never existed or that they have been subdued.

More care is required to answer the second part of the question. At first the nitrate should be passed very gently, and unless some unusual symptoms, such as great persistence, rapid recurrence of the emissions, or prevalence of head symptoms impel the surgeon to step out of his way, the application should never be renewed till not only the irritation set up by it has, so far as the symptoms enable him to judge, entirely subsided, but till the surgeon has satisfied himself, by passing the bougie, that no particular swelling of that part of the urethra remains. Days after the patient's sensations have ceased to warn him that the urethra still felt the effects of the salt, and when I have been positively assured that the canal was quite in a state to bear another cauterizing, I have, on passing the bougie, found that it was still too swollen, and sometimes also too tender, to make it probable that the application would be beneficial or even safe.

In my judgment, therefore, the surgeon should, in mild cases, only employ the nitrate very occasionally and at intervals of quite two or three weeks. In more severe cases he may use it more frequently, say once a week, beyond which it is rarely necessary to go ; but in every instance he should, in the earlier stages of the treatment, satisfy himself previously, by means of the bougie, that the canal is clear and not too sensitive. When a number 8 or 9 bougie will enter easily and without pain into the bladder, the caustic may at once be used. Later on this precaution is not so necessary, and the reason would seem to be this. The cases which in practice call for this remedy are those in which the urethra is in a slightly inflamed and irritable state, much the same as the conjunctiva after ophthalmia, and as little amenable to general means only ; at first, in the one case as in the other, the nitrate brings on congestion, but as the membrane gets firmer the disposition to this passes off, and the same application which at first causes almost occlusion of the passage, ceases to call forth any perceptible effect.

(*b*). *Injectons*.—Experience has convinced me that injections should always precede cauterization, and that unless stricture is present, they render any resort to the solid nitrate superfluous in at least four cases out of five, if not far more; while in every instance they so effectually reduce any irritability of the canal, that, when recourse must be had to caustic, this can be applied without setting up anything beyond a slight and perfectly bearable degree of smarting. Irrespective of their control over the emissions, this quality of removing abnormal sensitiveness renders injections highly valuable, often indispensable, in the treatment of spermatorrhœa; but useful as they are, I cannot too pointedly warn the practitioner against trusting to them to the exclusion of constitutional means. The cure, when they are alone relied on, is uncertain, and relapses are frequent, whatever may be said to the contrary.

The disposition which has long prevailed of looking on spermatorrhœa as a purely local affection, and the cause of all the weakness, languor, indisposition to rise and attend to either business or relaxation; of the feeling of indifference to all going on about the patient; of the prostration and dyspepsia, has given injections an unmerited reputation, and led some men to think them as much specifics as others do caustic. My experience induces me at once to say, that those who rely on any measures of the kind, must expect to reap only disappointment in a large proportion of their cases. Generally in spermatorrhœa there is evidence to show that the health is deteriorated; and even when this has arisen solely or chiefly from the exhaustion and irritation brought on by the emissions, the removal of these will not set the health right. I know that a widely different opinion prevails, but I can confidently appeal, not only to my own experience, but to that of any impartial person who has tried both methods. Used as an accessory to suitable treatment injections are often valuable, but I should never think of trusting to them uncombined. Even the strong injections used by Mr. Acton, which occasioned in some patients pain for quite a week after, constantly failed in this object.

As much depends upon the proper use of injections, I have only to say, that after making trial of solutions of different salts,

I have met with results which justify me in placing most reliance on the nitrate of silver. In my hands it has certainly proved superior to any other substance, and after balancing what I have read and what has been communicated to me, I feel warranted in saying, that it is the best material for this purpose.

The strength of the solution to be used, and the extent to which injecting must be carried, are both matters of vital importance to success. As a rule, the first injections should not exceed a quarter to half a grain of the salt to an ounce of distilled water. Some persons are extremely susceptible to the action of nitrate of silver, and a strength like that given above will be quite enough to set up heat and smarting for twenty or thirty minutes. From this time forward, however, the strength of the solution may be steadily increased, but the rate at which this is done must be left to the discretion of the surgeon. Some patients continue most sensitive to the action of the nitrate up to the end of the course, and with them the increase in strength must be very gradual indeed. I have sometimes not been able to carry it beyond a grain and a half to two grains. In other cases the urethra seems so insensible to pain that, after a few injections, a strength of even forty or forty-five grains to the ounce elicits no complaint. Nor is there anything in the physique and constitution of patients which can be relied on as a guide here. A strong, healthy-looking countryman will sometimes wince under a strength which is borne with ease by a pale, delicate person. I do not say that this is in any way the rule, but that it sometimes happens.

Till about two years ago I scarcely ever used injections more than three times a month, but since then I have gone much more boldly to work, and now constantly direct the patient, after a preliminary trial or two, to inject every second day, an advance which has been attended with the most gratifying results. The first patient on whom I tried this method was suffering most severely, and time was a great object to him; I therefore decided to inject him every second day, a method which procured a pause in the emissions of forty-nine days, though previously he had for long never gone a week without having at least two or three emissions. Although he had one or two slight relapses after this, the case did exceedingly well, and he left England apparently

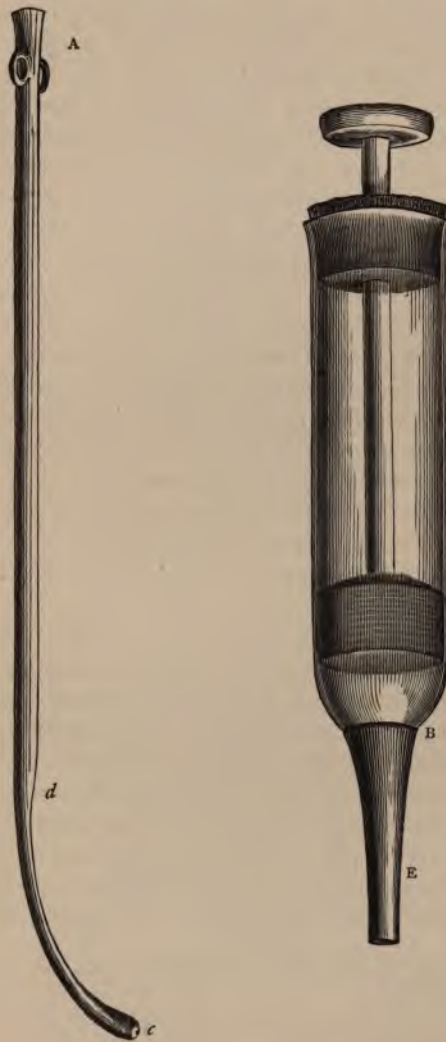


quite cured. In the second case, also a bad one, the same plan was immediately followed by a break of thirty-five days, and the patient got quickly and thoroughly well with scarcely a check. In several other cases the result has been equally successful; in two or three others not so much so, the solid nitrate being required; yet taken altogether I consider it a great improvement upon the old system. When the patient lives at a distance it becomes necessary to instruct him in the use of the syringe. In such a case a little preliminary practice with the gum-elastic bougie is useful, after which, any patient possessed of ordinary dexterity can master the whole process of injecting in one or two lessons, often in one.

In some persons, but more particularly when the patient has previously suffered from gonorrhœa, which had been treated with specifics and injections with a short syringe, it will frequently happen that an injection of only an eighth of a grain of silver nitrate to the ounce, or even of distilled water only, occasions a considerable degree of smarting, heat on making water, and even a certain amount of purulent discharge; and I have known patients so alarmed at this, as to suppose that the operation had brought back the gonorrhœal running, or was so severe in its nature as to be totally unsuited to the case. But such symptoms are the best evidence as to the value of injections in these cases, for they indicate a state of the urethra which would neither get well of itself, nor admit of being set right by medicines alone; while it would materially interfere with the cure of the spermatorrhœa. As to the dread which so many patients entertain about injections causing stricture and which is immediately called into play by the symptoms just spoken of, it may at once be disposed of as groundless; there being no reason to believe that injections, properly given, ever yet caused or even aggravated stricture.

To my thinking the best form of syringe is one with a detached tube like that shown in the engraving (A); it is much more easily introduced than when the latter is fixed to the nozzle. The opening by which the fluid passes into the urethra should be at the tip (*c*), and the tube should be sufficiently thick from the shoulder (*d*) to the rings to fill up the urethra, and slope from the shoulders to near the tip, in order, so far as is practicable, to

imprison any fluid forced forwards. This escape is to some extent prevented by the tip itself bulging out into a pea-like form. The nozzle of the syringe (B) is covered with a silver sheath (E),



so that it may easily be fitted tightly into the tube.<sup>1</sup> Syringes of the ordinary kind, perforated at the sides, or catheters with syringes attached, are not nearly so useful or well adapted for bringing the injection principally in contact with the part of the urethra intended to be acted on. The mode of using the syringe is as follows:—The tube is introduced into the membranous part of the urethra, the first selection of the part to be chiefly acted on, however, being determined by tenderness of the mucous membrane; the surgeon grasps the penis, firmly, low down, then the syringe, charged with two drachms of the solution of the required strength, is adjusted, and the piston is driven home, the syringe being withdrawn in proportion as it is emptied, so that no part of the urethra may be subjected to much distending force. The fluid is retained till the patient begins to complain of a strong sense of burning and uneasiness, when it is withdrawn; a piece of thick lint is then fastened over the mouth of the urethra. Should any stains be occasioned by the nitrate, they are speedily removed by rubbing in a solution of bi-cyanide of mercury, a drachm to half an ounce of water, or by the use of Thomas's cyanogen soap. A patient, who had carefully studied the matter, told me, that he found he could inject better when the tube was first of all fitted to the syringe, and the same statement has been made by one or two others, but it does not accord with the experience of the majority.

Under the head of injections must be classed the application of caustic fluids by means of the ingenious instruments devised by Mr. Henry Smith<sup>2</sup> and Sir Henry Thompson,<sup>3</sup> in which the distal end of a catheter, carrying a small sponge, saturated with solution of nitrate of silver, is made to protrude, and the fluid is brought into contact with the part of the urethra considered to be the seat of the disease. Mr. Erichsen uses a contrivance which he considers superior to either. In his instrument the sponge is retained within the catheter, and the fluid is made to exude by pressing a stilet against the sponge. I have not used any of the

<sup>1</sup> In the engraving the syringe is represented of the right size; the tube is reduced by one-half.

<sup>2</sup> *Medical Times and Gazette*; 1852, vol. i, p. 170.

<sup>3</sup> *Lancet*; 1852, vol. i, p. 89.



three, and am therefore perhaps not qualified to speak on the subject; I may say, however, that both kinds of apparatus (for those of the two first-named gentlemen are so nearly alike that they may be spoken of as identical), seem to me a great deal better than Lallemand's, and that a concentrated solution of nitrate of silver is much better suited to many cases than the solid fused in a spoon. But at the same time I cannot see that in theory these instruments are in any way superior to those which I have recommended; and, judging by what their inventors say, it does not seem that greater success has attended the use of them. Sir Henry Thompson and Mr. Smith seem to limit the use of the apparatus expressly to applying solution of nitrate of silver; while Mr. Erichsen not only employs this, but, after he has used it for a time, resorts to tannate of glycerine.

As to the strength of the fluid used by these gentlemen, and the amount of suffering induced by the operation, I find so little stated in detail that I can only offer some vague conjectures. If I have in any way misrepresented their practice and the results of it, this has simply happened because I have not been able to make out any more of the matter. I assume, however, that they apply a strong or even a concentrated solution of nitrate of silver at the first visit; and my experience of such a proceeding is that, by whatever instrument it may be effected, it will cause most severe pain, a grave, indeed almost prohibitory, objection in the eyes of many patients. Granted that a few men do not care much what torture they undergo so long as treatment is shortened, they are, after all, exceptions. The great majority dread suffering; and I do not see how strong solutions can ever be applied without giving a great deal of pain, unless we begin with very mild ones, and gradually increase the strength. I have said that it is prohibitory, and I believe it to be so. Certainly no surgeon ought to perform an operation likely to induce great suffering without first of all stating the real circumstances of the case to his patient; it is a breach of good faith to do so. For all these reasons I think the plan which I have recommended is preferable, and I believe I am justified in saying that it has found greater favour with the medical public.

(c.) *Galvanism*.—The application of any form of electricity to

the organs of generation must, I suppose, rank in the same category as the means just discussed. I am not in any way sure, but I believe the merit of employing galvanism for this complaint, in England, belongs to Dr. Henry Dick.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Julius Althaus, who has investigated the therapeutic powers of electricity with a care and perseverance worthy of the highest praise, states in the second edition of his work<sup>2</sup> that he has found galvanism of the prostatic portion of the urethra useful in bad spermatorrhœa. In the third edition he again tells us<sup>3</sup> that in cases of spermatorrhœa, and in chronic inflammation of the prostate, the application of the continuous current to the prostatic portion of the urethra is often followed by excellent results. He recommends that the negative pole only should act on the urethra, the circle being closed by placing a moistened sponge, connected with the positive pole, to the groin. Where "hypochondriasis is connected with imaginary or real disease of the sexual organs (sexual hypochondriasis, spermatorrhœa, impotency)," he tells us<sup>4</sup> that the best plan is to produce catelectrotonus, and to combine galvanization of the sexual organs with the application of the current to the nervous centres.

Farther on in the same edition<sup>5</sup> he gives us a case of bad spermatorrhœa cured by applying the cathode of fifteen cells for two minutes on the *veru montanum* by means of an insulated metallic conductor, the anode being placed on the perinæum; and tells us, apparently quoting from Mr. Curling, that galvanization of the prostatic part of the urethra may likewise be employed in this complaint.

I do not know whether it is from paucity of material, from a desire not to overload his work, or because he thinks the subject of little moment, that Dr. Althaus gives us such meagre details. Judging from what is laid before the reader, it would really seem as if he had only treated a single case in this way, for the one which he relates dates as far back as 1868, two years before the

<sup>1</sup> *Gleet: its Pathology and Treatment.* By Henry Dick, M.D. 1858, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *A Treatise on Medical Electricity.* By Julius Althaus, M.D. 1870, 623.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 1873, p. 343.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 501.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 671.



second edition, and five years before the third edition of his work. He gives us no summary of his experience, he alludes specifically to no other instance showing the beneficial working of electricity, and what there is of experience seems to be principally drawn from Mr. Curling's work.

M. Emile Neumann gives<sup>1</sup> a case of emissions cured by the constant current. They were so frequent that they occurred not only every night, but several times each night (!) and by day also; but the application of the negative pole to the sacro-lumbar region, and of the positive to the perinæum, daily for three or four minutes, in three weeks removed the day pollutions, and in five weeks had reduced the nightly discharges to one a week. After this the current was only used three times a week, with the result that a cure was effected by sixty-eight applications, only one relapse occurring. M. Mallez, too, who so completely ignores the prevalent view of this disease that he has laid down for it<sup>2</sup> a most elaborate system of investigation, including among other steps testing the patient's strength by the dynamometer, and exploration of the anus and prostate, and a still more elaborate treatment, recommends the descending current down the whole length of the spinal cord for eight or ten days, at the end of which time the current is to be reversed, so that I presume the process is kept up till a cure is effected. But however well such a mode of treatment may work in France, it certainly could not be adopted in England, as young patients here have neither the requisite time nor money at command.

For my part I quite despair of seeing electricity in its present form applied generally to the cure of this affection. As a remedy for impotence I am disposed now to think it of value, but in spermatorrhœa we have very different circumstances to deal with. Many of these patients are young and scattered about the provinces, and can neither afford the time nor the money for such a purpose. Even those to whom money is no object often cannot come to London and stay till an improvement has been effected. To use galvanism at home necessitates a sound practical know-

<sup>1</sup> *Gazette Medicale de Paris*; 1879, p. 433.

<sup>2</sup> *Le Mouvement Medical*; June 14, 1873. Quoted in the *Practitioner*; vol. xi, p. 129.



ledge of the subject, and this is certainly quite exceptional; besides, the mere appearance of the machine is apt to draw forth questions which the patient is most anxious to avoid. The necessity for cleaning and refreshing every kind of battery, and the noise occasioned by the magneto-electric machine, are equally grave objections. As to being galvanized by professional men in the country, the difficulty is almost if not quite as great. Many of them do not care to treat a case in this way, and others have not a good battery at command. Finally, we have to deal with the prejudices of patients against electricity. I proposed to a number of persons in succession to have the parts galvanized, and of these only twelve consented. Two of them lived at a distance. The first of them I instructed in the way of applying the electrode to the perinæum. He borrowed an electro-magnetic machine from a chemist, and finding that it required to be turned by an assistant, sent it back without using it. The second, a surgeon, though urgently pressed to make a trial, always promised but never performed. In six cases I applied the galvanism myself. The apparatus employed was a hundred-celled Becker-Muirhead battery, with large conducting wires. One sponge was sometimes pressed upon, and sometimes passed along the perinæum, while the other was slowly carried over the mesial line, from the lower end of the middle third of the sternum to near the navel, during the first part of the sitting, and over the spine in the second part. The number of cells used was determined by the sensation caused, being never carried farther than enough to induce a bearable amount of pricking. All these patients went through a complete course. One of them attended nearly every second day for quite three months. Not the slightest benefit ensued in any instance. Two were tried very carefully, and for a long time, with the magnet apparatus, but were just as unsuccessful, as were also two others, who used what they were told by the maker was a modification of Smee's battery.

As to the other favourite modes of taking electricity, that is to say by means of Pulvermacher's chains and electric baths, my experience has been equally unsatisfactory. Of the many patients who had tried the first before consulting me, not one ever reported a sign of improvement. Several had given it a fair trial; some of

them had worn two or three, and one as many as five belts for months together. As to the second, my experience is more limited, but not in any degree more flattering; one of the patients, who refused to have the constant current applied, took quite four or five dozen electric baths without being in any way benefited.

But there is still more unfavourable evidence about galvanism in this complaint. A patient who was very attentive to his case while under my care, and who seemed a perfectly truthful person, told me that he consulted a surgeon for this complaint, who recommended galvanism, and, on the patient consenting, introduced an electrode into the posterior part of the urethra. On the circuit being completed by pressing the sponge on the sacrum, a discharge of blood from the urethra took place, which so startled and alarmed the patient, that he got out of the house as fast as he could. Another patient, who was galvanized by his medical attendant under precisely similar circumstances, the electrode being introduced, as well as I could make out, into the prostatic part of the urethra, informed me, that directly the circuit was completed an emission occurred. I am therefore afraid that the difficulties which surround the use of galvanism and the evidences of its insuccess are prohibitory in a large majority of cases.

It may conduce to a clear understanding of what I have found the most useful plan of treatment, if I now give in as concise a form as I can the outcome of these scattered observations. Supposing then that complications, such as indigestion, which are likely to interfere with the use of medicines necessary for the cure, have been overcome, I would recommend that in every case, unless there should be such weakness as to call for quinine, steel be given in moderate doses, to be increased as fast as may be to at least a drachm three times a day. It is to be accompanied by an aperient pill and camphor at bed-time, the latter being only taken when an emission is expected, and given up so soon as one ensues. The operation of the steel is to be aided by the use of the urethral ring, sleeping cool, cold bathing in suitable cases, proper diet, and moderation in exercise. Out of fifty cases so treated perhaps five-and-twenty will be cured by these means; of the remaining twenty-five about fifteen more will require and be cured by bougies and injections, while in the remainder these

means must be followed up by the solid nitrate. In addition to either, or both, blistering must be resorted to in some few cases. Digitalin and sedatives are required for excitement and sleeplessness. Ergot of rye to be used after course of steel. Benefit from other remedies very problematical as regards cure of emissions. Each complication to be treated as directed under its special heading.

*Diet.*—In all forms of spermatorrhœa the diet ought to be plain but nourishing. The worst cases have always seemed to be benefited by a full meat diet, and it is not uncommon to find that a patient has starved himself to check the disorder and has aggravated it by doing so ; indeed, my opinion is that there must be few persons to whom such a plan is suited, as I have not seen one who had reaped any good from the attempt. Some of the most refractory cases I have ever seen were those of men who had tried this method, and had gradually so lowered their diet that, though it would support life, and a certain degree of health, it was totally unfitted to maintain the body in a condition to resist the inroads of disease. Patients often tell us that they are “extremely careful about their diet,” which generally means, when they are young, healthy men, that they are a vast deal too careful. One patient assured me that he had restricted himself to six ounces of roast meat and three small slices of bread daily. He literally ate nothing more, he said, and drank only water, never touching butter, milk, tea, sugar, wine, &c. He evidently plumed himself upon his abstemiousness, and seemed perfectly disgusted at hearing it spoken of as little, if any, better than insanity, and being told that a young healthy man, so long as he lived like a rational being and avoided things well known to be indigestible, might eat and drink anything he liked. Systematic starvation may be carried on for great part of a life time, with impunity, when the constitution is originally good and there is no great strain put upon it ; rejecting all such very suspicious stories as those about Cornaro, there is yet testimony enough to show that many people have lived in this way and reached a fair old age. Whether they were really as strong as if they had eaten and drunk after the ordinary fashion, is another and a different question, one



indeed which was never fairly tried, the subjects of the experiment having, without exception, been persons leading a quiet and very idle life. But the system breaks down at once under the tax imposed upon the frame by the exigencies of even ordinary labour.

We can at once estimate the importance of proper nutrition of the frame when we contrast the well-fed navigator, sailor, and engine-driver, with the wretched farm-labourer of the south of England ; when we compare the yeomen of Cumberland with the starved peasantry of Kent and Wiltshire, or contrast the english boating-man, the prize-fighter, the fox-hunter, with the under-fed artisans of Bethnal-green. In both cases we see, on the one hand an exuberance of rude health and strength, and on the other, men, sprung from the same race, sinking into helpless, ill-grown creatures ; unable to do a quarter of the work a well-fed navy can do ; prematurely old and crippled, as stunted in mind as in body, and an utter disgrace to the country.

I now proceed, from dealing with general principles, to give a few particular rules. As the space at my command for this purpose is very limited, it will perhaps be as well to warn the reader that these directions must necessarily be brief, but that if he wish for it, he will find a more full account of the subject in the *Hygiène of the Skin*. But brief as they may be, I trust they will be found of practical value, and better suited to a work like this, than an elaborate inquiry into the composition of our food and the chemistry of digestion would be.

When I say that spermatorrhœa patients generally require a meat diet, I do not mean an excessive amount of meat, or even an undue preponderance of it over other necessary articles of food, such as bread, vegetables, &c. ; but such a quantity as will keep the body in sound robust health, which, I should say, ought rarely, if ever, to be less than half a pound and not exceed a pound daily. It is perfectly certain that a great many persons eat a vast deal too much of it, and without reaping the benefit they expect from doing so. Such men as navigators, sailors, engine-drivers, labourers at the iron-works, &c., toiling hard in the open air, or in spacious well-ventilated factories and workshops, can

naturally enough consume, with impunity, a much larger amount than a man tied to his desk and hardly breathing the fresh air more than once a week. But these men do not always get such a quantity as is commonly believed ; most of them are liable, from the nature of their occupation and their improvident habits, to find themselves often placed upon very short commons. Perhaps the persons who eat most meat are the men-servants in rich families, and certainly the results of this diet in them are anything but encouraging, as I believe that, with the exception of draymen, few persons stand injuries and surgical operations worse than these men do, and that they rarely live to be very old.

The dinner should consist of meat and vegetables with bread. It is a point of great importance that the meat should be as tender as possible ; a great mistake is made in cooking it so newly killed that it must be tough. Soda should be added to the water in which vegetables are boiled, and they ought to be always boiled till they are thoroughly softened. The water should then be got rid of by straining and heat till they are quite dry. The neglect of these simple precautions is one of the greatest faults of english cookery, and one of the principal causes of indigestion after eating vegetables.

Meat, if not more palatable, is much more digestible when simply roasted or boiled than made up into stews, &c., which do not agree with dyspeptic patients, and indeed, seldom fail to produce a very uncomfortable sense of distension, especially when malt liquor is taken at the same time ; unpleasant eructations are also exceedingly apt to follow indulgence in the use of this dilute, seasoned food.

As to the choice of meat, I believe that is a matter of very little consequence so long as a grossly indigestible diet, such as one containing too much pork, pickles, salmon, and things of that kind, is avoided. I think there should be plenty of variety, and that whimsies of all sorts should be avoided. One patient expressed his surprise that he should be getting steadily weaker, as he lived with great regularity, he said, and on the best of meat. I found, however, that his idea of this consisted in eating four large mutton chops daily, one with each meal, and that he never departed from this rule. Another carried his mania for

having his meat underdone to such an excess, that he actually on one occasion, having invited some friends to supper, put before them, not an underdone, but a raw shoulder of mutton !

Although a good diet is useful in this complaint, it is, at the same time, indispensable that the patient should abstain from rich or concentrated meats, such as soups, jellies, and so on. I may seem paradoxical in condemning the most nourishing, as it is thought, of all food ; but nourishment is that which is digested and assimilated. Jellies, essences of meat, and articles containing too much fat, or which are too heavy and tough, overtax the powers of digestion, and still more those of assimilation. After living on them for a very little time, the tongue becomes coated and tremulous, and the breath foul ; constipation, thirst, and turbid state of the urine set in, accompanied by a dry and scurfy state of the skin, and wasting. The same sort of thing often happens from mixing really good things in an improper manner ; such as the addition of a chop and a pint of milk to breakfast, of stout to port wine, of meat to tea and supper. Good living aids nutrition ; these things, except in the case of some special exhaustion, manifestly impair it, and are therefore unsuitable.

Late hours for dining are either injurious or not beneficial. No patient suffering from spermatorrhœa should dine later than half-past five, and, if he can manage it three or four o'clock is still better. Heavy suppers are worst of all,—they are positively suicidal. I have not the same faith in diet, especially in the minutiae of diet, as many writers, but I have so often traced relapses or obstinacy of the complaint to this cause, that I speak rather confidently. To a light supper, when the patient must dine early, and especially when he suffers under much exhaustion, there is less objection ; but even then I think a late tea, with the addition of something substantial, is better. Occasionally this is impracticable, on account of the patient being rendered incapable of sleeping by the exciting effect of tea.

Good bread is one of the most important items of diet, as wheat contains within itself the three nitrogenized constituents of animal food—albumen, fibrine, and caseine. Now, a great deal of the bread sold, not only in London but in the country, owing to the



rejection of the bran in some cases, to the inferior quality of the wheat used in others, and to a conjunction of these two causes in a third set of cases, contains little more nourishment than would be derived from the same quantity of straw ground up, and even the whitest and finest bread is totally deficient in cerealin and phosphates. Nor does the best-made country bread contain these to such an extent as it ought, as a large proportion of the bran, in which they are found, is used for other purposes. For some time past, therefore, I have been in the habit of recommending patients to use the flour prepared according to Chapman's patent by Messrs. Orlando Jones & Co., as one pound of bread made from this flour contains quite as much nourishment as a pound and three-quarters of ordinary bread, besides ingredients which are not to be found generally in any other bread wherever it may be made.

Another point of great importance is a proper choice as to quantity and quality of what the patient drinks. Red wine, especially claret, seems to answer best in these cases. I have repeatedly heard from patients that, even when using the same medicines as previously, they had noticed a very decided diminution in the emissions after taking to claret. In some rare instances this decline has amounted to quite one-third or even one-half of the number. In very cold weather a little port or tarragona wine may be added to the claret. As to the quantity, I believe it is useless to expect any medicinal action from less than a bottle a day. The quality is a matter of very little moment, so long as the wine is pure and not sour. Sound vin ordinaire at a shilling a bottle is as useful, medically speaking, as the finest Lafite. Carlowitz is an excellent wine for this purpose. It has more body than claret, and is less exciting than burgundy. And here I may remark that I am not judging in any way from reports on wines in medical journals, the scientific analysis of chemists, or the severely impartial details of facts in the pamphlets drawn up by wine-merchants. I have not the least doubt, that both these medical and chemical reports are most ably and conscientiously made ; but I have also not the least doubt, that the wine sold to patients is often a very different product from that which elicited such praise on the first mention of

it. Scores of statements made by patients, and numerous trials with wines procured, unknown to the particular wine-merchant, have satisfied me on this head. In speaking of the value of carlowitz I am guided by the most careful study of the progress of cases under its influence, by the statement of the patients as to how they felt while taking it, and a fair comparison of the observations of these results with those obtained from examinations of patients taking port, sherry, claret, &c.

Red sicilian wine seems to be an excellent astringent and tonic. It has the great advantage for those who are not overstocked with money that it is, looking to the amount of healthy stimulant contained in it, one of the cheapest things that can be drunk. A very good way of taking this wine when its rather harsh taste proves an objection, is to mix with it a small quantity of some richer wine, such as new port or even tarragona, or the better kind of australian red wines. This method is particularly suited to winter, when wines like claret or red sicilian are too cold for the stomach. In this case the wines to be used should be mixed in the proper proportion, and decanted off into bottles each holding a day's consumption. If a bottle be opened frequently, wine of this quality is apt to get stale and then it nauseates the patient. I have long recommended this kind of mixture, and have every reason to believe that it is very useful. Many persons who cannot take claret alone, have found it, when fortified in this manner, suit them very well.

Spirits should as a rule be put under interdict, especially when taken hot. Rum and gin are the worst of all. Whisky, when it can be had pure and old, which is not often the case, is one of the least objectionable. Cognac seems to agree with some persons. My attention was first called to it by a patient who told me that, whenever he drank a glass of cognac and water before going to bed he never had an emission. I have since followed up the observation, and am disposed to assign a certain amount of value to it. A patient who had read this in a former edition, told me that he could quite confirm it. He had two or three times, merely for the sake of trial, substituted hot whisky or gin and water for cognac, and had each time an emission. Therefore, if a patient must take spirit, cognac is perhaps the

best. The excessively high price, however, to which it has now risen, renders it almost unattainable for a great number of men. Rum mixed with milk is a valuable remedy when there is a good deal of exhaustion, as from neuralgia, for which it is the best remedy I am acquainted with, and often in impending impotence ; but I have not found it agree so well with those suffering principally from emissions.

The breakfast is as important a meal as the dinner. So far as regards the choice between tea and coffee, ham and eggs, cold roast meat and fish, &c., the patient may, once for all, decide as fancy or experience suggests, but he certainly wants something of the kind every day. A good breakfast is essential to health and strength.

I have heard a good deal urged against tea and coffee, especially when taken at night, and it is pretty certain that in some few persons they induce sleeplessness and dyspepsia. In such cases, of course, they are better omitted ; but when they agree, they may be used without any fear of injury to the nervous system or stomach, and I have been astonished to learn from patients that medical men have told them there was a possibility of mischief occurring from their use. I believe the opinion, however, to be utterly unwarranted, and that tea and coffee are among the most precious gifts of Heaven.

This, however, applies to these articles in a state of purity. Tea is seldom sold pure, but for that the grocer and merchant are not to blame. They have great difficulty in procuring it unadulterated ; and when they do so they have still greater difficulty in finding customers who will give a proper price. Even rich persons object to pay a sum which a Russian or German in moderate circumstances would not hesitate at, and then complain of the deterioration that tea is undergoing. With coffee it is very different. A little care will always secure it pure, but so far as I can see very, very few persons will bestow even this little care on the matter. The coffee sold in London eating-houses and confectioners' shops is the worst in the world, worse even than that in Constantinople, as it is described in *The Innocents Abroad*. It is a black, nauseous, repulsive fluid, made still more unpalatable by the addition of the adulterated milk served up with it. Yet it is



drunk daily without complaint or protest by persons who can afford to live well and always profess to do so.

I have been surprised to find how prevalent the use of cocoa and milk for breakfast is among these patients. As to the former, which many have vaunted to me as almost a specific against indigestion, I should feel inclined to act on a saying ascribed to the late Earl of Derby, and prefer the dyspepsia, but when patients like it there can be no particular objection to its use; it is, however, entirely wanting in the fine diffusible stimulant which is found in tea and coffee. Milk alone is a most unsuitable thing, especially for persons advanced in life and of sedentary habits, unless eaten with such substances as porridge.

Years ago I used often to come in contact with persons who breakfasted on beer; now I rarely hear of such a thing. Possibly the practice is dying out, and that is about the best thing that could happen to it. Breakfasting in this way might serve very well for those who are always ready to set up a cry about the superior diet and wisdom of our ancestors; it might suit the harmless lunatics who would, if they could, get up our young ladies on the model of Jane Grey, or Elizabeth Tudor, who

“ Her breakfast would make  
Off a tankard of ale and a pound of beefsteak.”

It might have been fitly patronized by an enthusiastic Tory forty or fifty years ago, who followed in the wake of the then famous Morgan O'Doherty, and made it a question of principle, almost of religion, to despise such weak nervous stuff as tea and coffee, because our ancestors drank only good beer; or the worthies who “flourish immortal” in *Salmagundi* and *Bracebridge Hall*. But the time for these mistakes is pretty well over. Our ancestors were neither so healthy nor so strong and cleanly as the present race, and the very indifferent beer which they drank, for it was really poor stuff compared with that made by good brewers in the present day, could only have served to make them gouty, rheumatic, and dyspeptic. In that respect, at any rate, the “tymes of fadres old” have changed for the better.

Yet I have known men so far carried away by fancy as to say that they could not keep up their strength without breakfasting on beer and cold meat, though I never knew one who improved his

health by the practice. One patient who persisted in breakfasting thus and doing the same thing at tea-time, drinking quite a gallon a day of weak malt liquor, began at the end of about twenty months to show signs of considerable irritation of the kidneys, under which he speedily sank. After death, a largish calculus was found in the pelvis of the left kidney, which had destroyed a considerable portion of the organ. This patient had enjoyed very fair health up to the time of his perpetrating this freak. Another, a tall, powerful young fellow, a famous athlete, was kept to the house for months by lumbar pains, phosphates in the urine, &c., apparently from the very same thing.

Beer in the morning, particularly pale ale, is almost as bad. I could soon tire the reader by quoting instances of its mischievous effects. A gentleman, famous for his athletic achievements, persisted in this plan though I warned him of the effects. After two or three years' continuance, he began to suffer from great depression of spirits, pain in the back, a constant feeling of indisposition for any kind of work, mental or bodily, and loss of appetite. I found his urine loaded with phosphates, and this seemed to be the only clue to the mischief going on. I ordered him to leave off beer, and with excellent results. He soon improved, and said, when I last saw him, that he felt no inclination now to resume his old habit. Another, a very strong man, told me that he was suffering from nervousness, a complaint at which he had formerly laughed. I found that he took two or three glasses of pale ale between breakfast and lunch, and more than as many afterwards. He gave it up with the effect of complete recovery. Another patient, a man of excellent constitution, complained of being so giddy every morning between eleven and twelve o'clock, that he felt as if he must fall off his chair; he too had become so nervous that he often had to return home; he said that sometimes, when walking, if he attempted to set his foot down suddenly, a sensation came on as if his head must burst. He also drank pale ale every morning, and recovered entirely on leaving it off. A gentleman told me that for eighteen months he took five glasses of pale ale daily, touching no other stimulant whatever. During the whole of this time he never passed a fortnight without a sick headache; at last his suspicions fastening on the beer, he

gave it up in favour of claret, and had never had any headache since. It is unnecessary to lengthen such a list, but I may conclude by pointing to one remarkable and interesting fact, and that is the diminution in the use of beer among the officers in India. Five-and-twenty or thirty years ago more than half the mess might be seen drinking beer; now the number is more like an eighth, and these almost invariably young beginners, the older officers having learnt by experience that light wine suits them a great deal better.

In emissions, all kinds of malt liquor act most injuriously. It is difficult to say which is the worst kind, but perhaps pale ale is. An impression has got abroad that it possesses some tonic power, and improves the appetite; indeed, spermatorrhœa patients often express their surprise that they should be getting constantly weaker and losing their relish for food, while taking two or three pints daily of such a powerful restorative. But whatever strengthening properties it may possess, I have never been able to detect them either here or in any other complaint, nor did I ever see an instance in which it improved the appetite; while its deleterious power of bringing on giddiness, excessive discharge of phosphates, languor, &c., will soon be apparent to any one who studies its action in spermatorrhœa patients. Sometimes, when there is great exhaustion, especially after an injury or acute illness, old bottled stout is useful for a few weeks, and that is the only malt liquor of which I have a good word to say.

I do not deny that any kind of beer may often be taken with impunity by men using violent exercise; as, for instance, glass-blowers, iron-workers, reapers, mowers, &c., who perspire enormously, and who most likely could only bear stimulants in a very dilute form. Very often, too, the same amount of pale ale which, taken daily in chambers, would be poison to a man at his desk, might rather do him good than harm after a hard row on the river, or a long walk to his fishing on a hot summer's day. I am quite ready to admit, also, that many men take beer for years without any injury to health. But the question which really concerns us here is, whether malt liquor suits patients suffering from seminal emissions, and my experience leads me to say emphatically that it does not.



It is very possible that our ancestors, living a hard active life, hunting and campaigning, with very little brain work, stood this kind of thing better than we can, with our sedentary lives and over-taxed brains. But for good or for evil those times have passed to return no more, and we must let the dead bury their dead.

*Smoking.*—Patients constantly ask if they may smoke ; and I suppose that, without going into the scientific reasons for and against smoking, we may always pretty safely reply that there is no great objection to it in moderation, and when really pure tobacco is used. The only danger is in the abuse, and that, in the case of an attack of depression of spirits, the patient may sit at home smoking and brooding over his imaginary calamities, instead of going into society. Now spermatorrhœa is essentially one of these complaints, in which it does not do for a man to be too much alone. Cheerful intellectual society is one of the best preventives against the hypochondriacal, misanthropical feeling of which so many persons complain.

The efforts of Mr. Solly, Sir Benjamin Brodie, Mr. Lizars and others, to represent smoking as the most deleterious practice possible, the cause of national degeneracy and physical decay in our male population, of the prevalence of dyspepsia, nervousness, exhaustion, and shortness of life, however well meant, were, to say the least, extremely injudicious ; for their statements teemed with assertions which the simplest observation showed to be unfounded, and therefore not at all likely to convince any but the most unreasoning of the lay population. They maintained that the average height of men had declined in this country, while the size of the old suits of armour shows that this is not the case ; and when seeking to attribute the prevalence of nervous disorders and those of the stomach to smoking, they forgot that these complaints are common among women. Mr. Lizars wanted people to believe that smoking was fatal to ability and energy of character, whereas a list of the most able and energetic men of the last two centuries shows a large proportion of smokers. Again, Mr. Solly asserted that smoking interfered with longevity, but examples enough were brought forward to show that smokers often attain extreme old age ; among many others were quoted

that of Newton, who was a great smoker, and lived to be eighty-four, and of the famous Hobbes, who used to smoke thirteen "churchwarden" pipes every night, and who died at the age of ninety-one. He quoted, as a specimen of the infatuation induced by smoking, the case of a man who spent £300 a year in cigars, forgetting that at such an extravagant price as sixpence or eightpence for each cigar, he must have smoked from sixteen to twenty-two hours a day, *without the least intermission*, every day of the year. Sir Benjamin Brodie said that the mischief occasioned by smoking was caused by the empyreumatic oil of tobacco circulating through the blood, forgetting that it was first of all necessary to demonstrate such an extraordinary anomaly as that of an oil being taken up into the blood at all. Yet these strange statements passed for the most part uncontradicted. One journal even spoke of Mr. Lizar's pamphlet as "admirable," whereas I suppose it is one of the worst books ever written; bizarre and confusing in the arrangement, illogical in the reasoning, full of gross exaggerations, and abounding in bad taste and bad grammar.<sup>1</sup>

*Exercise.*—A patient suffering from this complaint should be out in the open air as much as possible, and take all the exercise he can without being wearied by it; but over fatigue in any shape is a mistake, and means courting a relapse. But while I at once admit the beneficial effects of exercise when properly pursued and resorted to in moderation, I am satisfied that most erroneous impressions prevail both with regard to the mode in which it should be pursued, and the extent to which it may be carried. In itself it is so excellent a thing that every man instinctively feels the necessity for it in some shape or other, and rich and poor, young and old must alike cultivate it or pay Nature's penalty for neglecting to do so.<sup>2</sup> It is the wrong mode of doing it and the over doing it which constitute the mistake.

<sup>1</sup> I quote one sentence, which is scarcely worse than the rest of this "admirable pamphlet." The parts in brackets and the notes of admiration are mine. "Query—If the ulceration (he does not say what ulceration) differs from carcinoma, a smoker runs (query, does a smoker run?) the risk of two diseases, viz. carcinomatous sarcoma (!) and carcinomatous nicotianum"!!

<sup>2</sup> "Æque pauperibus prodest, locupletibus æque;  
Æque neglectum, pueris senibusque nocebit."

I am constantly asked what is the best kind of out-door exercise for those who can procure it. I believe any kind will do equally well so long as the following conditions are carried out. 1. That from its nature or immediate effects the patient can be induced to take an interest in it. 2. That there should be sufficient emulation excited by it to make it rather a passion than otherwise. 3. That it should not be carried to such an extent as to induce any exhaustion. 4. That it should not be of too expensive a nature; and 5. That the patient should not have to go too far to reach it. Taken all in all perhaps few recreations offer so many advantages combined as volunteering, which may be pursued nearly all the year round, and in all kinds of weather. There is plenty of room for emulation in it, and as in some of the regiments gymnastic sports are now cultivated, unusual opportunities for indulging in them are thus afforded. Riding is an admirable practice when the organs are not too excitable, but I need scarcely say that it is a vast deal too expensive for many young men. Like the other sports it should never be carried too far; fatigue in the saddle will only too often bring on an emission. Patients themselves often notice this; a gentleman who hunted every Saturday told me that he very frequently had a discharge on that night, and always when he came home very tired, while he had none at any other time. Cricket, I confess, I am rather afraid of in many of these cases, as I have so very often found that patients have had an emission after a fatiguing day at it, and the same may be said of boating. Indeed patients often find that they have to give up both because they cannot pursue them in moderation, and unless they do this they cannot get rid of spermatorrhœa. A famous Thames oarsman was under my care for this affection in a severe form, and expressed the greatest incredulity when I told him that, after maturely weighing all the circumstances of the case, I had come to the decision that his rowing feats were the principal cause of the disorder persisting so obstinately. But when once his attention had been called to the connexion between the two, he speedily came over to my view, and then, of course, rushed into the opposite extreme, giving up boating altogether, as he said there was no middle course for him. Bicycle riding in excess is often just as injurious.



Gymnastics have been much extolled in this complaint, and I at once admit that at one time I gave them credit for more controlling power than I now believe them to possess. When the case is mild and the patient strong, as also when he is throwing off the disorder, gymnastic exercise is often harmless as regards the spermatorrhœa, and beneficial to the health and spirits; but in bad cases it does nothing but mischief. One gentleman, who had expressed himself very confidently as to the power of gymnastics to cure his case, gave a totally different account some months later after ample trial of them. His disorder had got decidedly worse, and an irritable feeling in the back, under which he had suffered, had now become aggravated; while he also complained of fatty stools, and a feeling when he rose from a chair as if fluid were escaping from the urethra, always a sign of a morbid state.

When the patient's avocation will not permit him to indulge in the pursuits just mentioned, he may still assist in the removal of many of his symptoms by rising early, and, when he feels adequate to it, having a cold sponge, followed by a short brisk walk or a turn for a few minutes at the dumb-bells or indian clubs. Usually he finds after a while, that though this may not be reducing the number of emissions, it is still doing him good; that he sleeps better and that his muscles are growing firmer; that he takes a more hopeful view of his case, and feels more energetic and competent to pursue a proper course of treatment. But a long daily walk, dragging through the prescribed number of miles with the view of keeping up the health, and overcoming the effects of hours of confinement to the desk or shop, is perhaps the greatest mistake these patients commit, and I have over and over again found it out of my power to master the emissions till this exhausting system had been given up. Such a practice may suit those who are in health; I am speaking here of spermatorrhœa patients, and I say quite advisedly that a long daily walk will often undo the effects of any treatment. There is nothing to object against a good brisk walk on a cold or fine breezy day; the argument is directed solely against the monotonous treadmill work, which is so erroneously thought to be beneficial in these cases. A tour on foot not unusually proves even more mis-

chievous, while I have never known it do good in a single instance.

Every kind of violent exercise or exertion should be avoided. Lifting heavy weights is one of the most foolish things possible. I have seen instances enough of its injurious action. In the first case that ever came under my care, the patient, at the end of seven months, was still suffering from excessive discharge of mucus in the urine and emissions. Dr. Bird mentions a case where a student at Guy's, having strained his back by lifting a sack of Epsom salts, fell into a state of marasmus and gradually sank.

*Moral Means.*—Some writers have laid great stress on the necessity for securing the mind from all impure ideas, and especially from reading all works on the subject; indeed from the tone adopted by several it would appear that this is the only remedy called for. Beyond all doubt both precepts are excellent, and ought to be enforced by every means in the surgeon's power, but no one practically acquainted with the disease would dream of relying upon them alone. It would be just as rational to lecture a patient with delirium tremens or impending mania upon his folly, or to ask a man suffering from the pangs of neuralgia or toothache to wean his mind from the subject. In the more severe forms of the disease some physical improvement must precede any steps of the kind.

Nor have I any more faith in the close mental application recommended by Dr. Carpenter. On the contrary, I have every reason to believe, that when it exerts any effect at all, it is in many cases injurious. Nor is this merely an individual conviction. Students, especially those preparing for examination, have over and over again, when once their attention was directed to the fact, found emissions return so regularly every time they began to study hard, that they had come to the conviction of its being useless to try and do much in the way of cure till the examinations were off their minds. But this is not the only objection to the plan. In a great number of bad cases I believe it is useless to inculcate study; the depression and irritation are too great to allow the attempt to succeed; and, with all the good-will possible, most of these patients cannot make a beginning till

they have gone through a course of tonics and purgatives. I therefore advise those who have time to spare, to begin study by reading *aloud* for an hour every night, and then go out as much as they can into society—a plan from which I have seen better results than from attempting to impose upon an exhausted brain a task it cannot possibly execute.

Earnest zealous students object to this. Their friends expect that they will work for honours, and they dare not be left behind-hand in the race of life. No alternative remains but to accept what lies before them, and acceptance means letting spermatorrhœa run its course almost unchecked. To keep in the van means to overtax both brain and body. The insane system of forcing now in vogue cannot be kept up without a ruinous strain on the economy ; and, though the strong stimulus of competition may prevent the effects from being seen at first, yet, when the period of rest arises, the result of all this folly comes to light. The harassed and successful student becomes gloomy, languid, restless, and unfit for any work ; miserable in society, and still more miserable out of it ; alarming his family with the intimation that he is going mad, and only too firmly believing that such is the case. In this way three or four years of misery are passed, far more time being lost than was gained during study ; at the end of which period the natural powers of the constitution often gradually repair the havoc caused by outraging sense.

The warnings of Sir Humphrey Davy, Sir William Lawrence, Sir Benjamin Brodie, and many others, against persisting in the present system of eternal cramming and lecturing, seem quite thrown away ; and boys and students are still forced and pushed on from the first to the last hour of their studies, till they are like hot-house plants,—making a great show at the expense of health and strength.

It should be taken into consideration that a patient, who wishes to be cured of spermatorrhœa, is in much the same position as a man who wants to get into a certain state of physical training, for instance, that for a boat-race or a foot-race, or a prize-fight. No trainer of any experience would think of coaching him up unless he could restrict the hours of study. The men who undertake this kind of work are, it is true, guided



only by rude tradition ; but it is of a kind which enables them to turn out splendid specimens of physical strength and endurance, and they know that they could not do this with pupils wearing out their brains day and night. Consequently, if a student labouring under this affection desire to attain the same high state of health as these athletes, he must follow their example as closely as his circumstances allow.

Men of great self-control and determination, who have put in force all moral means at their command, and who have sedulously cultivated athletic exercises, have at last been driven to lay their case before a surgeon ; after discovering, but too late, that all their efforts only served to arrest, not cure, the disease. The class of persons, too, most liable to it, shows how little mere moral means avail to effect a cure. Barristers, medical men, authors, tutors, clergymen, are, as they well know, compelled to try the effects of close mental application—yet these are the very classes that yield the largest proportion of spermatorrhœa patients. Still I do not wish to be misunderstood here. I hold healthy occupation of the mind, when it is restrained within fair bounds, and when it can be combined with due exercise of the body, to be an excellent means of keeping up the patient's spirits, of inducing him to persevere in his efforts under the most adverse circumstances and the greatest discouragement, and of substituting a pleasure which never wearies for frivolous or vicious amusements. I therefore always recommend patients to take up a hobby of some kind or other. Whether it be botany or insect-hunting, geology or archæology, fishing or sketching, matters little so long as it gives him plenty to think about ; a pursuit of this kind will always be of service and never can do any harm. Unfortunately only too many persons cannot be persuaded to make a beginning.

*Connexion.*—The vexed question of connexion is one which may be decided out of hand. I have already discussed the subject, and now touch upon it merely as a point of treatment. Many surgeons seem to think that the advice of Thetis to her swift-footed son<sup>1</sup> is the grand secret of cure. I believe the opinion to be a grave error, and one which often causes a great deal of

<sup>1</sup> “ ἀγαθὸν δὲ γυναίκε περ ἐν φιλότῃτι  
Μίσγεσθ’.”

domestic unhappiness. 1. Connexion *has no power of curing bad spermatorrhœa*; it may cause a diminution in the number of emissions, but this is only a delusion; the semen is still thrown off; the frame still continues to be exhausted; the genital organs and nervous system generally are still harassed by the incessant tax, and the patient is all the while laying the foundation of impotence. That the disposition to emissions is not in any way cured by marriage under such circumstances, is, I submit, conclusively shown by the fact, that they repeatedly begin again if, owing to absence or other causes, continence have to be enforced. This statement may appear overcharged, but I have every reason to believe it strictly correct. A gentleman informed me that, having been strongly recommended to marry in order to be freed from spermatorrhœa, he had done so, and that often when he had forced himself to have connexion with a view of securing a night's immunity, he had had an emission within three hours after. At the end of seven years, and after the birth of three children, he was quite as bad as ever. Another gentleman, under precisely similar circumstances, told me that at the end of eighteen months, during which he had given the natural remedy a fair trial, he was very much worse, a short period of continence being followed by the worst outbreak he ever had, the emissions having risen in one week to as many as nine or ten.

2. When the patient is nearly, but not quite cured, connexion will not even carry off the dregs of the disease. I have been consulted by a patient, whom I had previously attended, and in whom I have, after thirteen years of married life, found, on his becoming a widower, almost identically the same degree of spermatorrhœa as when I first treated him. Indeed, experience has convinced me that except in those rare cases where the patient will consent to be, and can be, treated after the ceremony, marriage must follow, not precede, a cure. When this can be done, even a very considerable degree of spermatorrhœa need not interfere with his marrying, as well regulated connexion is, *under the surgeon's care*, often an aid to treatment.

3. I have grounds for inferring, that bad symptoms in married men are very often due to connexion when the frame is really not strong enough to bear it. A mistake on this head is easily made

and not always so easily repaired. I was consulted by a gentleman for emissions. He had two or three every week ; he was of delicate frame, and at the time I saw him, desponding in a high degree. He was about to get married, and it was in respect to this that he wished to have my opinion. I recommended him not to take such a step until he had quite recovered. My opinion was overruled, and he married forthwith. Not long after he began to show signs of declining health, which gradually increased, and within two years from his marriage he died. In the summer of 1873 I was consulted by a patient who had formerly been under my care for emissions. They were very frequent, and were followed by a sense of exhaustion and a feeling in his head which he could not clearly describe, but which made him very miserable. Latterly the emissions had often occurred without awakening him. I advised him not to marry on any account till he was thoroughly cured. Not being satisfied with this opinion he went to one of our leading surgeons, who took a diametrically opposite view of the case, and recommended marriage. Being quite resolved, however, not to do matters by halves, he, in addition, consulted two of the most eminent physicians in London, who, according to his account, came to the same decision as the surgeon. Fortified by these opinions he married, and a heavy penalty he paid for doing so. Within a few months after he began to find that connexion, which was at first attended by a feeling of relief, was now followed by great exhaustion, and a return of the old miserable feeling in his head. He had lost flesh to a great extent, and had become so weak that he could not attend to business at all. He admitted readily enough now that he had made a sad mistake ; it needed no arguments to convince him that he ought never to have married. I recommended him to give up all connexion whatever, to take cod-liver oil, quinine, wine, and rum and milk, and at any pecuniary sacrifice to get immediate change of air. After remaining some months in a very critical state he left, with very doubtful prospects before him, and took a light situation in the country ; in 1880 he again consulted me, not having improved at all in the interval.

As to the amount of connexion itself, when thought desirable in the cases just discussed, there is one very simple rule, and that



is, to permit it only when the appetite for it becomes irrepressible in spite of all resolution to the contrary. According to the statement of an anonymous author, which Dr. Carpenter "believes to be strictly correct," it would appear that excesses in this respect are only committed by unmarried men. The idea is very praiseworthy, but the doctrine is essentially unsound.

TREATMENT OF THE COMPLICATIONS OF SPERMATORRHOEA.—*Vesicular Gleet.*—This disorder is generally very manageable, simple aperients and tonics, with cold bathing, followed by a blister, being usually all that is required. A little sulphate of magnesia or soda, taken before breakfast and dinner, or lunch, in combination with quinine, and an aperient pill occasionally at night, will produce one or two loose motions daily, and by this means induce a marked diminution of the discharge, and, when aided by blisters, will, I believe, rarely fail. Imperceptible passage of semen requires no treatment beyond that for exhaustion.

*Irritable Bladder; Pale Urine.*—Nitric or nitro-muriatic acid may be given when there is much irritability of the bladder or scalding. If the patient complain of spasmodic pain at the neck of the bladder, and we find the urine loaded with lithates or clouded with mucus, these acids, along with laudanum or liquor opii, may be exhibited in decoction of pareira brava or chimaphila.<sup>1</sup> The pale urine, so often complained of by men accustomed to great mental toil, is a symptom which has not received the attention it merits. It is by no means uncommon with persons so situated. Barristers have told me that they suffered from a copious discharge of pale urine soon after sitting down to master a brief. Some men are attacked directly they begin to play chess. A patient, who was very fond of algebra, assured me that so soon as

<sup>1</sup> R. Acidi nitro-hydrochlor. dil., ʒiss.  
Liq. opii sedativi (Battley) m. xl.  
Extracti pareir. brav. Ph. Lond., ʒj.  
Decoct. pareir. brav., ad ʒvj. ℥

Coch. ampl. duo bis quotidie sumenda.

Or R. Acidi nitro-hydrochlor. dil. ʒiss.  
Liquoris opii sed (Battley) ʒj.  
Decocti chimaphilæ, ad ʒviij. ℥

Capiat coch. amp. duo bis terve quotidie.

he got absorbed in a difficult problem he was obliged to rise and empty his bladder. A strong tendency to sleeplessness often accompanies this.

In such patients the skin sometimes acts very feebly till they take exercise, there being almost no perspiration and little transpiration. Very slight exertion, however, will bring on profuse sweating. To a certain extent they are accordingly benefited by friction of the skin, as with a hair belt and gloves, and a moderate use of vapour and hot baths. In general, when this irritability of the bladder is the only symptom complained of, it does not require any very great attention, but when it coexists with spermatorrhœa, or a strong tendency to this disorder, I would decidedly advise, that, in addition to the usual treatment by tonics, some part of the food, and especially what is taken to drink, should be given in the form of a diffusible stimulant. Thus, for instance, let the patient, so soon as he finds an attack of this kind coming on, take a glass of wine, such as madeira, or a cup of good coffee, or a basin of hot soup. A small basin of beef-tea, chicken broth, or veal-broth, with a large glass of port or tarragona in it, answers very well. Cream, vermicelli, or an egg, may be occasionally substituted for the wine; or an egg beaten up with a glass of port may be tried. If it continue to recur, let him try the french style of living—a cup of tea or a basin of light soup on rising; at half-past ten a good substantial breakfast, a thorough *déjeuner à la fourchette*, with half a bottle of claret; at half-past five or six a *light* dinner, something that will refresh the frame. After dinner a cup of mocha coffee or of tea may be taken, and in winter the patient may follow this up with a little rum and milk.

In attacks of prostration and excitability from undischarged electricity in the air, or at any rate from that state of the atmosphere which sets up electrical phenomena in the human body, the only treatment that I have seen do any good is one not suited to spermatorrhœa. However, for the time the symptoms just mentioned constitute the greater evil of the two, and therefore I generally order for them a very light diet, plenty of champagne, and rest on the sofa as lightly covered up as possible.

*Affection of the Prostate.*—I am not aware that anything of this

kind, occurring with spermatorrhœa, requires more than blistering and occasional resort to the nitrate of silver. This also holds good of urethral mucous gleet.

*Gonorrhœa and Gleet* are not unfrequently met with among spermatorrhœa patients. These are generally persons who, having almost recovered from spermatorrhœa, have suffered a relapse in consequence of contracting infection.

In gonorrhœa, as in all other diseases, each case must, to a certain extent, be treated on its own merits. The use of specifics, such as copaiba and cubebs, is still more to be deprecated here than where the case is uncomplicated; they are scarcely ever called for, are often useless, and too often injurious. The irritation of the bladder, the disordered state of the stomach, the lowered tone of the health, the foul and trembling tongue, induced by large doses of a copaiba, are particularly calculated to make the spermatorrhœa worse.

In general, however, if there be no great disorder of the health and no other complication present, gonorrhœa is soon subdued by aperients, acetate of potass, and mild injections, applied, not to the orifice, but over all the diseased surface.<sup>1</sup> In obstinate cases of gleet, blisters, tonics, mild aperients and injections, are, so far as I can form a judgment, the only means on which the surgeon can count for success.

*Irritable Urethra.*—A very useful means of diminishing any morbid sensibility of the urethra, especially in those cases complicated with slight stricture or gleet, is the use of a gum-elastic bougie, warmed till it is quite soft, and introduced twice a week. Aperients, tonics and sedatives combined, should also be exhibited; among these figure infusion of rhubarb and calumbo with soda; Dover's powder and hydrarg. c. cretâ; nitric acid, laudanum, dec. uvæ ursi, or infusion of quassia, &c., according to the circumstances of the case.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For further particulars I must refer to my work on *The Treatment of Gonorrhœa*.

<sup>2</sup> For instance :

R. Sodæ bicarb., ʒj.  
Syrupi aurant., ʒiij.  
Spir. myristicæ, ʒss.  
Inf. rhei, ʒiij.



Dr. Bliss recommends, for the spermatorrhœa itself,<sup>1</sup> dipping the bougie in iced water till its temperature is brought down to 38°, and introducing it twice a day, a method which seems to have succeeded very well. He does not tell us how the temperature of the instrument was ascertained, but were this difficulty got over, a still greater would remain behind. In England few spermatorrhœa patients could carry on such a process themselves, and not one in fifty could attend twice a day to have the operation performed by a surgeon. Winternitz, seemingly in total ignorance of what Bliss had done, tried<sup>2</sup> to effect much the same purpose by means of a double chambered catheter, pouring through it a stream, at first of hot water, and then of cold ; a mode of treatment which did not succeed very well in this affection, though it answered famously for gleet.

To my thinking the english bougies are by no means well suited to these cases, especially when there is any stricture. In the first place the shape is bad. A bougie of the form shown in the annexed engraving is much better adapted to the case, and passes with far greater ease. In the next place the material is too hard and unyielding. The french instruments, as we usually see them in London, are not over safe, especially those with ball-points, which are often partially torn off by drawing them through a stricture. Those made by Mr. Walters for me, which can be tied in a knot, and, when steeped in hot water, are so pliable that they cannot possibly do any harm, are in my judgment much better. Mr. Teevan, whose opinion is entitled to all possible respect, is in favour of the best french bougies ; but after examining the matter again I see no valid reason for retracting my decision on this point. A bougie of this kind, dipped in very hot

Inf. cuspariæ, ad ꝑviiij. ℥

Coch. amp. duo ter quotidie sumend.

℞ Hydrarg. c. cretâ, gr. iv.

omni nocte sumend.

or, Pulv. ipecac. comp., gr. vj.

omni noct. sumend.

The Dover's powder may be made into a pill with either glycerine or aromatic confection ; but it is not safe to treat the hydrargyrum c. cretâ in this way, as the mercury is easily reduced by rubbing.

<sup>1</sup> *Boston Med. and Surg. Journal* ; 1868, Jan. 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Berliner Klinische Wochenschrift* ; 1877, S. 401.

water, then dried and well oiled, will pass along the urethra and scarcely give even the least uneasiness, when an ordinary instrument would occasion intolerable pain. Some surgeons seem to think pain is rather desirable in spermatorrhœa than otherwise. Mr. Adams advises<sup>1</sup> that a bougie should be passed, and that if it cause a little pain and bleeding, all the better, as that will divert the patient's mind from imaginary sufferings ; but I should think pain an evil to be always avoided, if possible, and more likely to divert the patient from consenting to steps absolutely necessary to the cure.

Irritability of the urethra however, and especially the second form spoken of, may require, in addition to the bougie, the occasional use of nitrate of silver, and even of a blister. The uneasy sensation in the epididymis or testicle is sometimes benefited by a sedative application, such as veratria ointment. If this fail there can be no harm in applying a blister, at least I never saw any, and I have repeatedly done so. Patients suffering from these symptoms generally require a long course of treatment, consisting of the occasional use of tonics, accompanied by the administration of aperients, and aided by good restorative diet.

*Stricture* is not a very common complication of spermatorrhœa, unless the patient has suffered also from gonorrhœa. I have, however, several times seen it when there had been no foregoing urethral discharge, and when the contraction seemed really due to the irritation set up by the emissions. It is generally under these circumstances much more manageable, and the constriction has always appeared to me to be shorter, thinner, and weaker than the ordinary kinds. Indeed, unless the disease has been allowed to go on unchecked till it has attained a most unmanageable form, the stricture which results is seldom very difficult to treat. It seems hard to understand how an affection, induced by the spermatorrhœa, should, when once produced, keep

<sup>1</sup> *Medical Times*, 1857, vol. i, p. 453.



up the parent disease; yet such appears to be the case, and I have sometimes found that the cause of resistance of an obstinate case was a stricture, the existence of which had not been ascertained. In others I have found that the emissions got well, and yet that the stricture went on unchecked unless it was treated.

This is not the place to launch into an essay on the management of stricture, and therefore I restrict myself to very narrow limits. The cases with which the surgeon has to deal seldom embrace any of the more serious circumstances, such as sudden occlusion of the passage, retractile stricture, fistulæ, and so on; consequently most of them call for little more than the use of the bougie recommended for irritable urethra. Should the progress not be satisfactory, two or three applications of the nitrate of silver, by means of the instrument previously described, generally produce such a relaxation or absorption of the stricture as to enable a No. 9 bougie to pass with ease. Contraction of the anterior portion of the canal may require the use of the screw-dilator; for any lesion of the posterior part of the urethra I should feel more hesitation about employing it. These means will, I believe, remedy any form of stricture usually met with in spermatorrhœa which will really yield to treatment, and there are very few that will not.

Patients usually labour under the impression that in treating stricture it is absolutely necessary to distend it steadily, progressively, and it may be forcibly. This is a mistake, and especially in regard to traumatic and retractile stricture. At no time does any such amount of excessive force as may give pain prove serviceable; in the two latter forms it is the very reverse. Of course a patient who has just made some progress, say got up from number four to number eight, is exceedingly mortified at finding that he must go back all at once, not to four, but to three or even two; but this must count for nothing against the certainty of aggravating mischief by attempting dilatation when the canal will not bear it. At such times what is wanted is, not the largest-sized bougie that can be got through the constriction, but a size that will pass into the bladder without setting up irritation.



Traumatic stricture is occasionally met with as an accompaniment of spermatorrhœa; it is a very distressing complication, and one which sometimes long defies the most sedulous care, the pain and irritation behind the seat of injury being often but little influenced by art. In a case in my practice, where a blunt instrument entered the urethra from the perinæum, the patient continued for years after to suffer most severely from the symptoms I have just mentioned. They seemed to be quite unaffected by treatment. Connexion, he said, always aggravated them. Stricture, when there has been an antecedent neglected gonorrhœa, may also prove extremely obstinate.

*Irritable state of Foreskin.*—Whenever there is an accumulation of sebaceous matter under the prepuce, it should be got rid of as quickly as possible with soap and water, aided by the subsequent use of an astringent lotion of zinc or sulphate of copper. For the time being this will suffice, but sooner or later, and particularly when there is also a *contraction* of the prepuce, so that the glans cannot be uncovered without pain; where a firm, constricting ring has formed underneath the mucous membrane, or where the emissions seem to be kept up by the extreme length of the prepuce, circumcision, or at any rate division of the constricting ring is absolutely necessary. No patient, too, who is going to reside for a long time in a hot climate, should omit to have division at least performed.

When circumcision is imperatively called for, I have found it best to slit up the skin and mucous membrane to the reflection of the latter, and then to cut away the frænum as far as I could. The constricted part, which is mostly near the edge, is removed in a circle with a pair of sharp scissors, and the bleeding being stopped, the skin and mucous membrane are brought together by several fine stitches; the intervening spaces may be covered with wet lint. Of all the operations I have seen this leaves the neatest prepuce.<sup>1</sup>

But a simpler and milder plan of proceeding is to divide the foreskin on the dorsal surface, drawing back the loose outer skin towards the pubis, so that, when the division is completed, the

<sup>1</sup> "Mr. Milton's plan is simple, and as good as any."—*On Gonorrhœa and Syphilis*. By Silas Durkee, M.D., p. 78.

posterior point corresponds in each thickness of the foreskin. Three stitches only are required to keep the parts together ; one at the apex and one at each side. True, two rather unsightly little flaps are left at first, but they gradually shrink to almost nothing, and can always be snipped off should the patient object to their presence, which, however, I have never yet known a patient do. This mode, which effectually frees the glans and reflection of the foreskin from sebaceous matter, has the advantage over circumcision, that it requires a shorter time to perform, is less painful, and confines the patient less to the house. Properly performed, and properly attended to by the patient, it leaves scarcely any mark.

*Coldness of the penis and scrotum* is an important symptom, and should not be lost sight of, as it often increases or diminishes with the growth or decline of the spermatorrhœa, so long as impotence has not ensued, when it becomes chronic and often pervades the whole frame. When, in a case of spermatorrhœa, this symptom persists, the surgeon must make up his mind to treat it in earnest, or very unsatisfactory results may follow. I am most anxious, in respect to this as to any other symptom, not to say a word which might create unnecessary alarm, but I consider that it would be a gross dereliction of duty, for an author who knew the importance of attending to such a warning, to disguise the truth with the view of flattering any opinions or prejudices whatever.

One of the first things to do is to give quinine, if it has not been given before, and this is one of the few affections of such a nature in which it may be advantageously conjoined with iron. The *citras ferri et quiniæ* may be prescribed in doses of five grains three times a day, but there will rarely be much improvement till it has been continued some time, and till the patient can take quite double this amount, or even more. The patient may take a glass of rum and milk at night, gradually raising the quantity of the former from one to two wineglassfuls of rum. It is, however, essential that this should be pure and old, and that the milk should be good. As both these requisites are attainable, in London at any rate, there is no excuse for any negligence on this head. I have often seen very good effects from the use of a course of De Jongh's cod-liver oil, especially during cold weather.

Whenever it is necessary to interrupt the use of the citrate, I would give the preference as a substitute to the dilute phosphoric acid, a medicine from the due use of which I have seen much benefit; the patient must, however, take at least a drachm daily.

*Varicocele.*—In my opinion an unnecessary amount of importance has been attributed to this complication. Mr. McDougall says that in the severer cases nearly one-third of his spermatorrhœa patients were suffering from varicocele, and there is no doubt that a certain amount of it is by no means uncommon in these patients; but whether this proportion is greater than in persons free from spermatorrhœa is a point we have yet to learn. As I never saw the treatment or neglect of this symptom exert any appreciable influence over the course of the spermatorrhœa, I rarely, if ever, interfere with it, except at the express wish of the patient, when a varicocele ring may be worn, or a small spring clip, which seems to answer even better.

Mr. Curling, however, says<sup>1</sup> that varicocele tends gradually to impair the nutrition and diminish the secreting powers of the testicles. It is important, therefore, in the event of observation bearing out Mr. Curling's opinion, that this complication should be attended to; and the author gives us the encouraging information, that after the dilated veins have been closed by an operation, the atrophied glands have in some cases recovered their former size and tone.

*Indigestion.*—The indigestion also which accompanies spermatorrhœa is generally of a very simple and manageable kind. Aromatic confection in combination with sulphite of soda and mint-water,<sup>2</sup> an aperient pill occasionally at bed time, and a full dose of Bullock's pepsine fifteen minutes before dinner or lunch, almost invariably suffice to remove it, and if occasionally in-

<sup>1</sup> *Op. citat.*, p. 413.

<sup>2</sup> The following prescription has proved in my hands useful in so many hundreds of cases that I feel no hesitation in giving it :—

℞ Sodæ sulphitis, ʒi.

Confect. aromat., Pharm. Lond., ʒij.

Acidi hydrocyan. diluti, m. xvij.

Aquæ menth. pip., ad ʒvj. ℥

Coch. ampl. duo bis quotidie sumend.



effectual, are at least as efficacious as the most complicated prescriptions ingenuity has yet invented. The citrate of bismuth and ammonia, in half drachm doses of the liquor, three times a day, accompanied by the occasional use of an aperient pill, is often very serviceable. The pill should contain sufficient blue pill or calomel to act briskly on the liver. These remedies generally give a good account of all the forms of dyspepsia seen here; which, as I have said, are of a by no means refractory character. Mr. McDougall mentions<sup>1</sup> a case in which the simplest food would not remain on the stomach, and the patient had "frequent eructations of fluid which blazed like oil if spit out into the fire," but I have not observed anything like such severity in the symptoms.

*Sebaceous Stools.*—Among the complications of spermatorrhœa I have occasionally found patients complain of a discharge of fatty or sebaceous matter, sometimes swimming like grease on the top of the water in the pan of the water-closet, sometimes in the form of flattish cakes about half an inch in the longest diameter. The latter symptom occasionally gives a good deal of trouble, as the secretion is apt to cling to the anus, or get entangled in the hairs. I had one patient in whom the fluid form assumed almost the character of adipose diarrhœa. He was strongly built, but his skin had a peculiar earthy, pasty look, and his digestion was in bad order. He was liable to faintness, constantly discharged large quantities of urates, and complained of weariness, weakness, and great pain over the loins. He had long suffered from emissions, and had been under my treatment for a slight gonorrhœa. The discharge at stool took place every day, and in considerable quantity. The use of quinine in two-grain doses twice and then three times a day, aided by mild aperient pills, sulphite of soda mixture, very careful dieting, and two or three injections of nitrate of silver had almost entirely removed this unpleasant symptom, when he was obliged to leave off attending. About a year afterwards he consulted me for another complaint, and I then learned that he had ceased to notice the sebaceous matter within a few weeks after his last visit.

*Worms.*—It has been asserted that spermatorrhœa may depend

<sup>1</sup> *Op. citat.*, p. xi.

upon fissures in the anus, ascarides,<sup>1</sup> &c. To which I reply, that I have strong doubts about the fact, and I am very glad to find that Mr. Curling opposes this view ; but as these causes would require removing for their own sake, it is obvious that the treatment must be much the same. In one case in which the emissions were almost epileptiform, ascarides were present ; but the seminal emissions subsided rapidly without any proof that the ascarides were removed. In another instance, where these pests had so obstinately resisted all vermifuge remedies that one very experienced surgeon told the patient, that if he were to take out the mucous membrane and scrape away every vestige of the parasites, they would still return, the emissions were cured in the end without any evident abatement of the other nuisance. In all the cases I have seen complicated with the round worm, and they are but very few, masturbation had also been practised to such an extent as alone would have proved adequate to bring on emissions. These cases of round worm, I must admit, all proved very intractable, and it would appear that unless the complete destruction of these parasites be effected, little can be done for the emissions. The use of the steel, however, so generally proves adequate to their removal, that it is not necessary to try anthelmintics till it has failed.

*Treatment of Urinary Deposits.*—At one time, when I used to examine the urine with great care, I treated disturbance of it very elaborately, and I suppose there is no rule of practice which I have more completely unlearned. Should the patient really be ill in other respects when he is suffering from urinary disorder, or be very anxious about the appearance of the urine itself, it may perhaps be better, for a few days, to leave other matters on one side and attend to this. Similarly, when he is recovering from his spermatorrhœa, no harm can arise from prescribing as fully as he may wish for any disturbance of this fluid. But until the emissions are mastered, I consider all such practice as utter waste of time and money. Whatever cures them will do all that is requisite in the way of setting the urine right, while the most complicated treatment of urates and phosphates, if it leave the main disorder unrelieved, means sacrificing the substance to the shadow. However, as cases now and then arise when it becomes

<sup>1</sup> Dicenta gives ascarides among the causes,

necessary to do something, I give a few directions which, restricted as they may seem, still embrace all, or even more than all, that is ever called for in spermatorrhœa.

When phosphates are present in the urine the accompanying symptoms must be very carefully looked to. Generally speaking, it may be said that, irrespective of this deposit following a strain or blow, the first great requisite is a free use of diffusible stimulants, such as ammonia and ether. Thus, for instance, the ammoniated tincture of valerian may be given in drachm doses, three times a day, or the aromatic spirit of ammonia in the same quantity, and either of these may be conjoined with half-drachm doses of the spirit of ether. Rum and milk at bedtime, especially if pains be taken to secure *old* Jamaica rum, answers very well with these patients. Dr. Harley, when the patient perspires freely and the sweat is acid, recommends<sup>1</sup> nitro-muriatic acid with gentian after meals, and a dose of sulphuric acid, to diminish the perspiration, between them. Very small doses of strychnia may be given with advantage. I know of no method superior to that of prescribing it in the acid and bitter mixture mentioned at page 76. Those cases in which a deposit of the phosphates follows an injury of the spine are more rarely seen in connexion with spermatorrhœa, and fall rather within the domain of general surgery. In these cases one of the most valuable remedies is, especially if there be pain, a large opium plaster over the seat of the injury. When this cannot conveniently be resorted to, sponge-baths and friction over the loins with a horse-hair belt may be employed. The general treatment is much the same as in the preceding class of cases. Citrate of iron and quinine seems to answer very well. Dr. Prout used to give morphia with very great benefit in these cases, but to be of any value it will be requisite to order quite half a grain to a grain daily. The acetate, in conjunction with the solution of acetate of ammonia, offers a very useful formula.<sup>2</sup> Oxalates in the urine require abstinence from all

<sup>1</sup> *Medical Times and Gazette*, 1864, vol. ii, p. 484.

<sup>2</sup> ℞ Liq. ammon. acetatis, ℥iiss.

Spir. æther. nitr., ℥ij.

Morphiæ acetatis, gr. j.

Mist. camph., ad ℥vj. ℥

Coch. amp. duo ter quotidie sumenda.



heavy food, ill-cooked vegetables, sweets, wine and beer; cold, unsweetened brandy and water or whisky and water being substituted. Nitric and nitro-hydrochloric acid, with tincture of orange-peel, cinnamon or calumbo, accompanied by mild mercurials and laxatives,<sup>1</sup> are useful when great nervous irritation exists. The late Dr. Golding Bird used to give sulphate of zinc in large doses, often prescribing along with it a small amount of hyoscyamus and camphor. It is, however, according to my experience, very questionable whether it equals the tincture of the sesquichloride of iron. Colchicum is sometimes of service.

Perhaps more than any other deposits urates and uric acid may be left to themselves. No doubt we can relieve them, and more scientifically too, by means of various prescriptions of alkaline mixtures and gentle alteratives, combined with equally various and efficacious modes of promoting perspiration; and when the patient will be prescribed for these seem to be among the best things to order. But I now invariably advise him to let the matter alone, or at the utmost to take two or three doses of saline and to keep to a light diet. When gastrodynia is also present dilute hydrocyanic acid or bismuth may be given just after meals. Dr. Golding Bird used to prescribe in these cases oxide or nitrate of silver; but staining of the skin has so often resulted from the use of both, that I think neither ought ever to be employed unless the symptoms are of the most serious nature, and that we rarely, if ever, find in spermatorrhœa. The amount of animal food ought to be reduced as low as is compatible with the preservation of strength, and in very urgent cases had better be suspended altogether. The tincture of the sesquichloride is also very useful here, and colchicum is often beneficial.<sup>2</sup> Tartrate of potass, and

<sup>1</sup> R. Acidi nitric. dil.

Tinc. cinnam. aa ʒss.

— cinchonæ, ʒij. ℥

Sumat coch. min. i. ter quotidie ex aquæ cyatho.

<sup>2</sup> R. Extr. colch. acet.

Pil. hydrarg. aa gr. vj.

Extracti hyoscyam. gr. xij. ℥ ft. pil. vj.

Sumat i. omni nocte.

phosphate of soda are also of value.<sup>1</sup> The presence of cystine generally indicates a necessity for giving acids which will promote the elimination of bile, as the nitric or nitro-muriatic, or the use of iron, as the tincture of the sesquichloride or tartrate. The state of the health should be carefully attended to, the bowels acted on by gentle aperients and alteratives, and all malt liquors, rum, *et similia*, be avoided.

As I have never seen blood or albumen in the urine to such an extent as to call for special treatment, I refrain from touching upon points in therapeutics which might lead me too far from the subject in hand. Pus I have occasionally seen in very alarming quantities, but there was nothing in the history of any of the cases, or in the results of treatment, to justify the belief that it required any measures except those calculated to ward off exhaustion. When this symptom yields at all, I believe it always yields to the treatment laid down for spermatorrhœa, and possibly the tincture of the sesquichloride of iron is as potent a remedy against it, especially when conjoined with mild counter-irritation over the seat of the disorder, as any that could be suggested. An excess of mucus generally calls for the use of alkalies, such as the bicarbonate of potass in some astringent decoction or infusion, as that of pareira, uva ursi, or buchu, but for these substances to exert any real influence over cystorrhœa they must be taken in much larger doses than are generally prescribed. The amount of bicarbonate of potass need not exceed fifteen to twenty grains, but to order ʒss. or ʒj. of decoction of uva ursi or infusion of buchu, seems to me waste of time. We might as well tell the patient that he would find two or three table-spoonfuls of warm tea a refreshing meal. Either the patient should be directed to make the decoction and infusion (for I think they act best in conjunction) himself, and take quite half a pint daily, or a scruple of the hard extract of pareira should be added to each dose.

<sup>1</sup> ℞ Potassæ tart., ʒi.  
Syrupi aurant, ʒiv.  
Spir. myristicæ, ʒij.  
Infus. cuspariæ, ad ʒvj. ℥

Sumat coch. amp. duo bis quotidie.

Phosphate of soda may be substituted in the same doses, as only small quantities are required when a diuretic effect is aimed at.

Liquor potassæ acts very well in some of these cases ; half a drachm may be given two or three times a day in quite half a tumbler of good milk, which disguises its nauseous soapy taste infinitely better than anything I know. Weak table-beer is considered preferable by some practitioners. Benzoic acid is said to be occasionally very useful in intractable cases.<sup>1</sup>

*Gout, Rheumatism, and Neuralgia.*—If a patient suffering from spermatorrhœa or a tendency to impotence be attacked with gout, rheumatism, or neuralgia, I believe he inevitably suffers a relapse. It may not be severe, or it may be very troublesome, but my experience is, that he always gets somewhat worse. It is possibly this tendency to increase of emissions which has made some writers think that gout augments the desire for connexion, but I am inclined to believe its action is the very reverse, and that the same holds good with respect to every disorder attended with pain.

I would, therefore, always suggest removing the pain itself as quickly as possible. I know of nothing which gives so good an account of the last traces of gout and rheumatism as the vapour bath, and as this can now be had at a much less cost than formerly, there is no longer so much difficulty in the way. In gout colchicum and alkalies still seem to be the favourite remedies, colchicum having perhaps stood its ground better than any other. In my hands it has failed so often that I confess to a great want of faith in it, and I prescribe it frequently more as a matter of routine than conviction. Nor have I, on numerous occasions, been more successful with alkalies of any kind and in any dose. Effervescent drinks have been extolled by a recent writer. Such remedies usually refresh the patient, and so far as that part of the matter is concerned, may be given in almost every complaint with some benefit ; but I never observed any diminution of the pain and swelling from the freest use of them. The remedies which have succeeded best in my hands are sedatives, especially the compound form mentioned at page 91, a dose of saline mixture in the morning, and quinine and iron by day. As to external appli-

<sup>1</sup> R. Acidi benzoici, ʒj.

Glycerinæ, m. xij. Misce et ft. pil. xij.

Sumat ij. bis quotidie.



cation I have had little success with them, but those recommended for rheumatism can be tried. Rheumatism is for the most part promptly checked by the use of nitrate of potass and iodide of potassium,<sup>1</sup> a mode of treatment which has answered better with me than salicylic acid alone or in combination. When severe pain is present, sedatives should be given as for gout, and after the first severity of the pain has been suppressed, quinine and iron should follow, accompanied by the saline. The most reliable applications in severe cases is I think beyond question blistering, but arnica and hazeline seem to give relief, as does also a strong solution of opium with camphor and chloroform.<sup>2</sup> In neuralgia the medicine from which I have seen most relief is a combination of valerian powder with sulphate of quinine, a scruple of the first to a grain, a grain and a half, or two grains of quinine, three times a day ; but I at once admit that it is a most disagreeable compound. Sir Charles Bell's prescription of galbanum and croton oil<sup>3</sup> is also to be highly recommended.

<sup>1</sup> ℞ Potassii iodidi, gr. xv.  
Potassæ nitratis, ʒiss.  
Syrupi aurantii, ʒvj.  
Mist. camph. ad ʒvj.    ℥

Pars sexta ter quotidie sumenda.

<sup>2</sup> ℞ Guttæ nigræ.  
Chloroform. aa ʒj.  
Lin. camph. c. ʒij.  
— saponis, ʒiv.    ℥ et fiat embroc.

A little to be rubbed into the painful part with a piece of flannel at least once daily.

<sup>3</sup> ℞ Ol. tigllii (croton) gtt. i. Mass. pil. colocynth, c. ʒj. Misce et fiant pil. xij. Mitt. pil. galban. comp. xij. One of the purgative pills and two of the gum pills to be taken on going to bed.—*Institutes of Surgery*, vol. ii, p. 119.

## CHAPTER V.

### TREATMENT OF IMPOTENCE.

It will now be necessary to go over, as briefly however as is consistent with efficiency, the remedies most adapted to the cure or relief of impotence; and I may as well explain, that by remedies I do not mean everything that has at one time or other been recommended for the affection, but such as careful observation warrants us in regarding as most suited to effect the purpose arrived at. I do not propose to examine them in the same way as those recommended for spermatorrhœa, for as they are mostly the same medicines, that would really mean repeating what has been said already; my object is rather to condense what seem the most useful facts known in respect to them. In writing upon the question of treatment, I wish to discard all lines of demarcation between the different divisions of impotence; they are here only matters of degree. I am assuming that the management of the more transient forms is comprised in that of spermatorrhœa, and that we are dealing here with an affection of some standing, and of sufficient importance to call for treatment when no other symptom is present.

The plan of treatment I would venture to suggest would be the following. In the first place, quinine should be given regularly for a considerable time without the least regard to whether it appears to be doing good. Along with quinine strychnia may be given, but upon quite a different principle. The dose of the former requires to be slightly but regularly raised every six or eight days. There can be no objection to combining either with capsicum; a remedy which has been praised by some writers, but from which I have seen little if any positive benefit. I have, however, never given it except with other drugs, so that I am scarcely qualified to speak very positively. The dose of strychnia on the contrary should never be increased beyond a third to half a drop

of the liquor. It may be often necessary to interrupt the administration of the quinine; the strychnia should be continued whatever tonic medicine the patient may be taking, phosphorus and ergot of rye excepted. The great secret of success here is to give it in very small doses for months together. In the way of formula I know nothing superior to that given below<sup>1</sup>.

When the patient is anæmic or suffers from the coldness spoken of above, or when he has grown rather tired of quinine and it seems to be losing its effect, iron may be given along with the quinine, and cantharides in very moderate doses can be added, but the latter remedy must be used very guardedly, and given up directly any symptoms of strangury show themselves even remotely. Employed cautiously, however, as for instance in five or ten-minim doses of the tincture for eight or ten days at a time, I see no valid objection to its employment, and never hesitate to prescribe it.

Should the patient be very low, and find or even suppose, that quinine and iron do not suit his stomach ammonia and citric acid can be added.<sup>2</sup> The quantity of quinine in the mixture can be gradually raised to thirty or forty grains, and that of the citrate to two drachms and a half, beyond which I have not found it advantageous to go.

But however well quinine may be adapted to the first emergencies of the case, there generally comes a time when its action on the system begins to flag so evidently as to attract the notice of the patient. It is of no use to raise the dose of the medicine any longer, the constitution has become accustomed to the use of

<sup>1</sup> ℞ Quiniæ sulphatis, gr. xviii.

Magnes. sulphatis, ℥iv.

Acidi sulph. aromat., ℥ij.

Liquoris strychniæ, m. ii.

Tinct. capsici, ℥ss.

Aquæ cinnam., ad. ℥vi. ℥

Cochleare amplum ter quotidie sumendum.

<sup>2</sup> ℞ Quiniæ et ferri citratis, ℥i.

Tinct. cantharid., ℥i.

Liquoris strychniæ, m. ii.

Spir. ammon. aromat., ℥vi.

Acidi citrici, gr. L.

Aquæ, ad. ℥vi. ℥

Cochleare amplum ter quotidie sumendum.



the remedy, and the only thing is to give it up for a time, after which it may be resumed with almost certain anticipation of benefit. During the interval I would recommend the use of phosphorus. From the thirtieth to the twentieth of a grain may be prescribed in the form of a pill, and the dose gradually raised to as great a height as the patient can bear. To succeed however with this drug, some special precautions must be taken.

I suppose every man who has seen much of this affection has tried phosphorus for it, and I believe many at least have reaped only disappointment. Part of this may be due to the fact that the doses usually given are too small. Anything less than the twentieth of a grain three times a day has never, in any instance that I have seen, produced any particular effect so far as I could observe, and not unfrequently double this quantity must be taken.

Another cause of failure is that the phosphorus is not preceded by a course of quinine, and that the use of it is kept up far too long. According to my experience it is like the ergot, of little if any value except as an adjunct to other remedies, and should never be continued for more than from two or three to five or six weeks, the latter being the extreme limit of time. Even this may be too long, nausea, vomiting, and other very troublesome symptoms coming on at the end of three or four weeks, when the first signs of its disagreeing are neglected. A third cause is that phosphorus is so often given alone, whereas I think it should invariably be accompanied by an aperient pill or saline, to be taken at least once or twice a week. Given in this way almost any person can take phosphorus, and usually with benefit. On suspending the remedy, ergot can be substituted, and after a time the patient goes through a second course of phosphorus, which is generally all that is requisite.

Employed with these limitations phosphorus may take rank among our reliable medicines for impotence. In one case where the patient was improving while taking it, I twice suspended the medicine for the sake of experiment. Both times the amendment came to a stand-still, and both times, on renewing the employment of the medicine, the patient expressed himself decidedly more satisfied with his condition. Another patient, whose case

looked at one time very unfavourable, his age being near forty and the weakness having begun at an early time of life, and lasted for some years before he put himself under my care, derived marked benefit from the use of this drug. As to the mode of administering it, I think that, without exception, the pills made by Mr. Cox of Brighton offer the best medium. They keep extremely well and are made up of the strength of  $\frac{1}{32}$ ,  $\frac{1}{30}$ ,  $\frac{1}{24}$ ,  $\frac{1}{16}$  of a grain. A gentleman describing himself as extremely nervous, and long afflicted with emissions, told me that he derived great benefit as regarded both affections from the use of Kirby's unoxidized phosphorus, in doses of a thirty-third to the thirtieth of a grain.

Whether the patient is taking quinine or steel, cod-liver oil may be at the same time administered, during cold weather; it is not however suited to a hot or even warm season. The only oil, however, I should be disposed to place any reliance on, is De Jongh's. In hot weather the hypophosphite of soda, in half-scruple doses, may be tried as a substitute, but my experience of it has not inspired me with any high opinion of its merits, whereas from the oil I have seen benefit. When the patient cannot take the oil, rum and milk at bedtime or early in the morning can be substituted, and the patient should have some red wine every day, avoiding beer as he would poison. Here, as in spermatorrhœa, I have often seen claret of service, while I never saw any form of malt liquor beneficial. The only remaining drug from which I have reaped any good is the ergot of rye, which should be given as directed for spermatorrhœa.

Having heard that the russian castor possesses considerable power in restoring the vigour of erection, I resolved to try it carefully. I found, however, that it was not to be had in London, except, perhaps, as a specimen here and there in a museum. I sent to Apothecaries' Hall, and to nearly all the leading wholesale druggists, but the collective information obtained was to the effect that none had been imported into England for quite forty or fifty years, and that the remnant of the stock had long been sold out. In Pereira's time it had become so scarce that he paid £2 per ounce for a museum sample. I applied to a large russian merchant, who kindly made inquiry for me, and his answer confirmed that given by the druggists. No castor he said had been

imported from Russia for many years, nor could any be procured at present, whatever price were offered for it, before the fair at Nijni Novgorod. Under such circumstances, those retail druggists, who secured such apparently inexhaustible supplies, must be congratulated on their foresight. Pending these inquiries, I on two occasions prescribed russian castor, and was assured by the patients that they had the medicine made and that they took it regularly ; and I have kept with great care a prescription of the same kind, which the patient averred he had had made up fifteen to twenty times, and which was written by a medical man who was in the habit of prescribing the russian castor at least every week, and never yet had the slightest difficulty in getting his prescriptions compounded.

Since the last edition of this work was written, I have tried galvanism in a few cases, and in some instances I think with benefit. The forms of apparatus employed were the same as those used for spermatorrhœa, that is to say a hundred celled Becker Muirhead battery, used however only in three cases ; Smee's battery once, not seen by myself, the case being only reported by the patient, the magneto-electric apparatus four times. Although the patients were most persevering in the employment of the remedy and gave it every chance of success, the result fell very far short of what has been reported by some writers ; for I need scarcely tell the reader that there are men who conscientiously believe in the power of this agent, even when unaided, to restore lost virility.

Dr. Beard, who has treated these subjects with so much care and ability, says<sup>1</sup> that if restricted to one remedy for nervous exhaustion, with which many cases of impotence must certainly be classed, he would choose electricity. Dr. Julius Althaus mentions<sup>2</sup> several cases in which impotence was cured by the continuous current of the voltaic pile, shocks from the Leyden jar, faradization of the testicles and spermatic cord, and galvanism ; so that we are scarcely likely to go wrong in our choice if we can only accomplish the more difficult part of the task, and induce the patient to go through a course at all. When there is a want

<sup>1</sup> *Neurasthenia (Nerve Exhaustion), with Remarks on Treatment*, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *A Treatise on Medical Electricity* ; 1870, p. 620.



of erectile power, he considers faradization of the ischio-cavernosus and bulbo-cavernosus muscles useful, and gives a case of cure by this method. When impotence is due to an exhausting cause, such as over-study, he recommends, along with general treatment, the continuous current to the lumbar spine. Mr. Curling finds the interrupted faradic current useful in impotence.<sup>1</sup>

In the third edition of his work Dr. Althaus relates<sup>2</sup> some cases of impotence cured by Westring, Stacquez, and others, with the continuous current, faradization, and so on; in fact, so far as I see, he repeats pretty exactly what he said three years before. He advises general treatment to be combined with electricity where impotence is caused by mal-nutrition, diabetes, syphilis, lead-poisoning, or the habitual use of opium and hasheesh, excessive tea or coffee drinking, by over-study and similar causes. The form of electricity to be used here is catelectrotonus of the lumbar cord, with galvanism to penis and testicles. Galvanism of the spinal cord may restore the sexual energy where it is lost from disease of the spinal cord. He thinks it possible that electricity might improve or cure deficient secretion of semen, always supposing that this deficiency is due to paralysis of the secretory nerves of these organs, and not to changes in the structure of the testicles from cancer, tubercle, &c.

This does not open up a very encouraging prospect for patients suffering under this affection. The varieties described by Dr. Althaus as being beneficially influenced by electricity, do not, with the exception of those brought on by over-study, form a fiftieth part of the cases seen in actual practice. About the latter the author gives us no information which would enable us to judge as to when electricity succeeds and when it fails. There is nothing like an attempt to estimate the percentage of cure, and the one case recorded by the author as an instance of success dates as far back as 1858.

Impotence offers peculiarly an arena on which we might expect to see the power of electricity displayed to advantage, and it is much to be regretted that more has not been done to utilize so powerful and valuable a remedy, especially as we are not met here by the same obstacles as in spermatorrhœa, many of these patients

<sup>1</sup> *Op. citat.*, p. 429.

<sup>2</sup> P. 668.

having more command of time and money, whereas that is often enough not the case with the others.

At one time I tried the galvanic belt extensively, and many of my patients saved me the trouble of any experiments by trying it themselves,—in both cases with the same result. I never saw an instance in which this apparatus did the least good.

One of the greatest difficulties in the treatment of impotence is to overcome the apathy of many persons thus affected, especially if they are at all advanced in years. They seem to grow quite indifferent to the prospect, as if they would rather know the worst than find out a ray of hope; hypochondria masters them so completely, that I have frequently heard men of thirty-five talk about their being too old for cure, and, to judge from their mode of expressing themselves, rather liking such a conviction.

The action of medicines requires to be aided here, as in spermatorrhœa, by diet and chastity. Abortive attempts at connexion are worse than useless. Unfortunately, the idea has gained ground that marriage is, after all, the remedy. A self-indulgent man easily persuades himself that abstinence is the cause of what he calls temporary impotence; and numbers of patients not only take this false step before being cured, but persist in trying to have connexion long after they have begun to notice that every essay of the kind, whether successful or not, is followed by an aggravation of the symptoms.

Unfortunately too an idea prevails that this loss of power can always and at any time of life be set right by a few doses of medicine, without any attempt at perseverance and self-denial on the part of the patient, who not unfrequently complains at the end of a week or two that he is no better! But the truth is that is scarcely ever an easy, and not always a possible, task.

In young persons the evil is not so serious, and soon repaired with a little attention; but it is melancholy to see the effects of this false impression upon the minds of old men, who, after having been long impotent, fancy that the surgeon can resuscitate the power forfeited by years of over-indulgence, and blindly pursuing this delusion through every disappointment, turn aside from the reasoning of those who seek to convince them of their error. So long as they notice an erection in the morning, they flatter them-

selves that their virile power is only in abeyance, and requires merely its natural stimulus in order to recover its early strength. But the symptom should really be interpreted as meaning that the patients' state offers a fair chance of restoration; not that it will get well of itself without anything being done for it either by himself or others.

And now, as a parting word, I would urge the surgeon to impress upon the patient to remember, that youth is peculiarly the season for cure, and that in this, perhaps more than in any other case, hours fly quickly, and once flown can never be recalled. Life is but a long day, and passes like it.<sup>1</sup> Those who, like myself, have often listened to expressions of regret at unprofitable waste of time and forfeited opportunities of retrieving the past, may be excused if they seek to warn others by an experience which they will buy only too dearly. But at no period of life is anything to be gained by delay. It only means waste of time and money, health and happiness. To hope for the best and in the meantime do nothing towards attaining it, may indicate a confiding and cheerful disposition, but it is not the way to grapple with a difficulty; such a frame of mind is no doubt praiseworthy in the highest degree, the drawback is that it will not supply the place of that decision which is so necessary here. For the exercise of that decision, too, a man is all the better. To yield supinely to a misfortune is to renounce the exercise of judgment and resolution; to bend every nerve to master it calls into play some of the highest qualities of the mind. No do I see anything impracticable in the suggestion that such an effort should be made. There is nothing called for at the hands of the patient, beyond what men do every day of life for ends less important than the recovery of health.

<sup>1</sup> "So passeth in the passing of a daie  
Of mortall life the leafe, the bud, the flowre."



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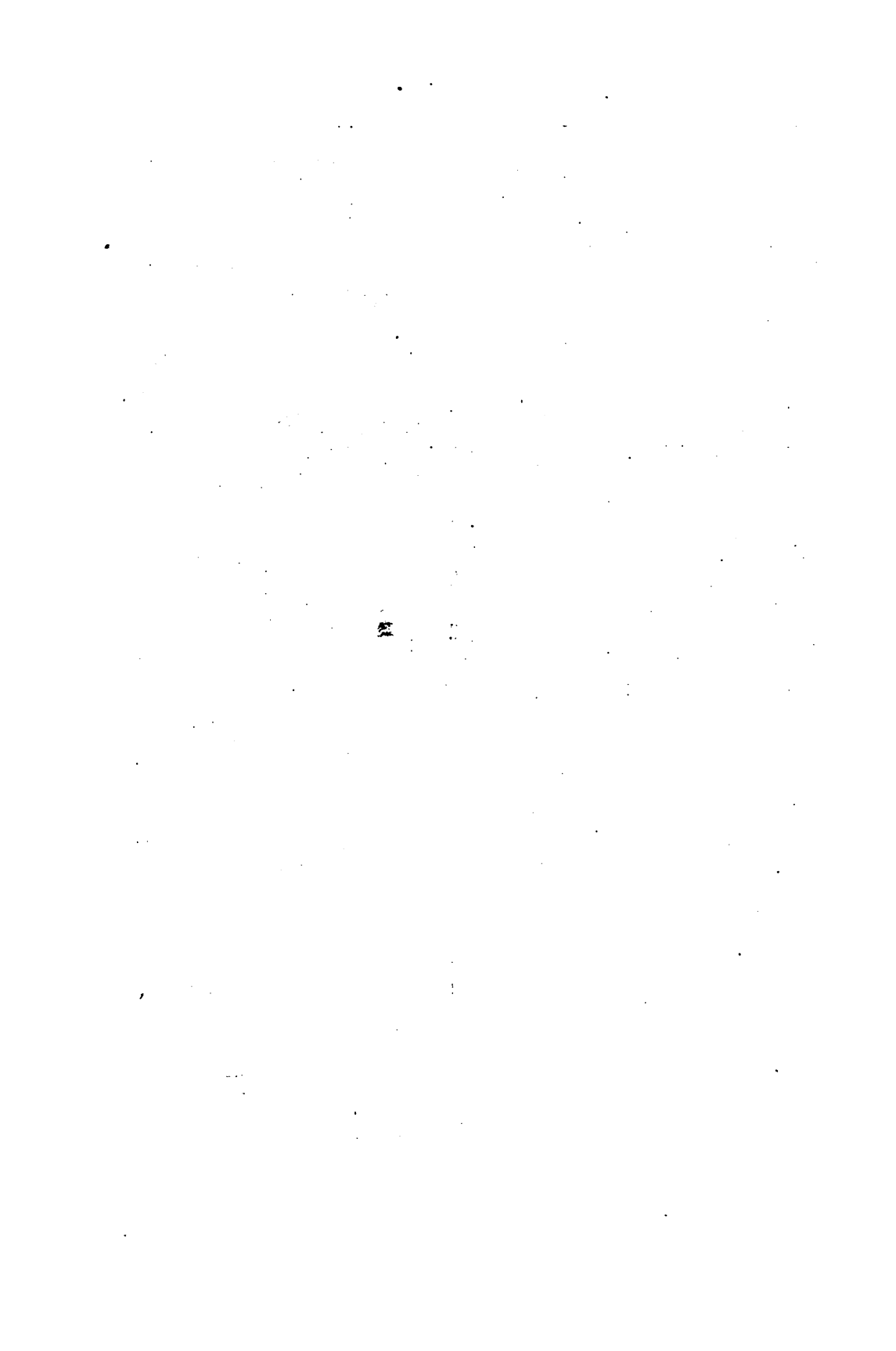
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